

**The effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12  
achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools**

by

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submitted in accordance with the requirements  
for the degree of

**MASTER OF EDUCATION**

in the subject

**EDUCATION MANAGEMENT**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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January 2019

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many people played a special role during this study period but I would like to acknowledge the following people:

- To the God of all seasons, I worship Him. He gave me wisdom and strength during hard times of completing this study. Indeed, He is the light unto my pathways and a lamp unto my feet and His benefits are with me! To God be all the Honour and Glory.
- I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr PK Triegaardt for his patience, guidance and mentorship throughout this study. It was never easy. Thank you, Dr Paul.
- To my loving husband, Nyengedzo Muthumuni, your support my love has been so immeasurable. I love you, Mukololo, Aa!
- To all my children, Vhuhwavho, Lerato, Vhuthuhawe, Oripfa and Apfiwaho. Thank you for your understanding of spending days without me during data collection. You are the main reason for my continued endurance. I love you.
- To UNISA (M&D bursary funding), thank you for your financial support.
- To my editor, Corrie Geldenhuys for her effortless proofreading and editing.
- To the Mpumalanga Department of Education for granting the permission to conduct the study in its schools.
- The Mkhuhlu circuit manager, thank you for allowing me to conduct my study in your schools.
- A special word of appreciation to the principals, teachers, SGB members, Grade 12 learners and parents for your participation in my study. Your contribution has been immeasurable.

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned hereby declare that:

### **THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON RAISING GRADE 12 ACHIEVEMENT IN MPUMALANGA RURAL SCHOOLS**

is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. I further declare that I have submitted the thesis/dissertation to originality checking software.



Veronica Mapaseka Monamoleli

10 January 2019

## **DECLARATION BY THE SUPERVISOR**

I undersigned hereby declare that:

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The originality software checking report obtained by the candidate has been considered by me and I confirm that the dissertation meets an acceptable standard of originality.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to be 'P. Triegaardt'.

Dr Paul Karel Triegaardt

Supervisor

10 January 2019

## **ABSTRACT**

The *South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996* mandated the establishment of the democratically elected School Governing Body (SGB). The SGB's mandate was to ensure the smooth running of the school, quality education and parental involvement in learners' academic achievement. The study examined the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools. A qualitative investigation at three schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit, Bohlabela District in Mpumalanga was done. Data were collected by means of in-depth interviews with one principal, one teacher, one SGB member, three Grade 12 learners and three parents at each of the three participating schools and document analysis was done as a method of collecting data. The findings of the study revealed that SGBs and parents are not aware of their importance on the learners' education. The study recommends that SGBs and parents be empowered by principals in order for them to execute their roles effectively.

## **ISIFINYEZO**

Umthetho wezikole waseNingizimu Afrika Nombolo 84 wango 1996 wagunyaza ukusungulwa kwekomiti lesikole (SGB) elikhethwe ngokwentando yeningi. Lomthetho ugunyaze lelikomiti lesikole ukuthi lenze isiqiniseko sokuthi isikole sihamba ngokwendlela, imfundo isezingeni eliphezulu kanye nokubandakanya abazali ukuze imiphumela yesikole ibe phezulu. Lolucwaningo luhlale umphumela wokubandakanya ikomiti lesikole kanye nabazali emfundweni yezingane ukuphakamisa imiphumela yebanga leshumi ezikoleni zasemakhaya esifundazweni saseMpumalanga. Lolucwaningo lwenziwe ezikoleni ezintathu zesifunda saseMkhuhlu eBohlabela. Uphenyo nzulu lwenziwe kuthishanhloko oyedwa, uthisha oyedwa, ilunga lekomiti lesikole elilodwa, abafundi bebanga leshumi abathathu kanye nabazali abathathu kwase kuhlaziya nezincwadi zesikole. Imiphumela yalolucwaningo ikhombise ukuthi amakomiti ezikole kanye nabazali abanalo ulwazi oluphelele ngokubaluleka kwabo emfundweni yezingane. Izincomo ezenziwe ezokuthi othishanhloko kufanele baqeqeshe amakomiti ezikole kanye nabazali ukuze benze umsebenzi wabo ngempumelelo.

## **MANWELEDZO**

Mulayo wa Afrika Tshipembe nomboro 84 wa 1996 wo nea maanda u tewa ha komiti dza u langula matshimbidzele a zwikolo (SGB) yo khethwaho nga lutamo lwa vhathu vhanzhi. Ndivho ya komiti iyi ndi u langulwa ha zwikolo nga ndila kwao, pfunzo ya maimo a ntha na u dzhenelela ha vhabebi kha ubvelela ha vhagudiswa kha mishumo ya tshikolo. Tsedzuluso ino yo sedzulusa ndeme ya komiti ya u langula matshimbidzele a zwikolo na u dzhenelela ha vhabebi kha u khwinisa mvelelo dza murole wa vhufumi na vhuvhili kha zwikolo dza mahayani. Tsedzuluso iyi yo itwa kha zwikolo zwiraru kha dzingu la Mkhuhlu, Tshitirikini tsha Bohlabela, vunduni la Mpumalanga. Mawanwa a tsedzuluso iyi o kuvhanganywa uya nga mbudzo dza vhudzivha na thoho ya tshikolo, mudededzi muthi, murado muthi wa komiti ya matshimbidzele a tshikolo, vhagudiswa vhararu na vhabebi vhararu kha tshinwe na tshinwe tsha zwikolo zwo bulwaho afho ntha, na tsedzuluso ya manwalwa. Mawanwa ayi tsedzuluso a sumbedza uri SGB na vhabebi avhana nzhele nga vhuthogwa havho kha pfunzo ya vhagudiswa. Tsedzuluso ino i themendela uri SGB na vhabebi vha maandafhadzwe nga thoho ya tshikolo hu u itela uri vha kone u ita mushumo wavho nga ndila kwao.

## **KEYWORDS**

Academic achievement

Attitude

Learners

Parents

School governance

School Governing Body

School management

Socio-economic status

Teachers

Parental involvement

Rural schools



## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

DOE- Department of Education

HOD- Head of Department

IEB-Independent Examination Board

MDOE- Mpumalanga Department of Education

NAE- National Agency for Education

NDA- National Development Agency

PE- Physical Education

PTSA- Parent Teacher and Student Association

SAS- Singapore American Schools

SASA- South African Schools Act

SGB-School Governing Body

SMS- Short Message Service

SMT- School Management Team

UNISA- University of South Africa

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

According to the study done by Nyathi in 2006, learners from most schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit drop out of the school system prematurely and end up becoming welfare-system beneficiaries at an early stage. Their individual subject performance of below 50% also deprives them of opportunities to further their studies at university level because universities' point system in terms of admission is mostly higher than what learners have. According to Independent Examination Board (IEB) Matters (2015). Grade 12 learners need at least an adequate achievement in their final senior certificate examination with a minimum rating of 4 and a percentage of between 50 and 59% to enter for university studies in South Africa. As a result, Grade 12 learners end up not being employed or, if employed, as labourers on farms because they have no tertiary qualifications.

Nyathi (2006:15) confirms this by outlining how learners in the Mkhuhlu area are less concerned about their education. He further argues that in the findings of his study in 2006, he found out that learners from the Mkhuhlu area become absent from school for a long time for initiation ceremonies, or girls become absent during child social-grant paydays (Nyathi, 2006:15). In short, such behaviour compromises learners' school time because it interferes with their schoolwork; hence, they are away from school for long periods whilst teaching and learning continue at school. The role of parents in this instance, according to Sander and Sheldom (2011:30), is to monitor their children's whereabouts, discuss with their children about school, and being members of a parent-teacher association also known as School Governing Body (SGB). This therefore, means that for the improvement of school attendance, it is helpful for the school to inform parents about their children's absenteeism and that will minimise poor attendance and improve the academic performance (Sander & Sheldom, 2011:31).

Another challenge for learners in the Mkhuhlu area is that poverty is the dominating factor. According to the National Development Agency (NDA) (2009), unemployment in Bushbuckridge in the Mkhuhlu circuit is very high, especially in rural areas, with less

than 15% of the total population being employed. Therefore, the living standard of people in these areas is characterised by high levels of poverty. Furthermore, about 17% of the population is illiterate (Bushbuckridge Socio-Economic Development Report, 2016).

Dikgale (2012:21) argues that illiteracy in parents is mostly caused by the fact that most parents in rural areas never had a chance to get formal education due to some reasons such as poverty and social evils. Poverty hindered them because their parents did not have basic requirements for essential stuff like food and proper shelter and did not even have money to send their children to school and apparently, education was seen as luxury they could not afford. On the other hand, Dikgale (2012:22) further highlights that social evils were a problem that hindered parents to go school. These included early marriages that ended up forcing young women to take care of their households and young men to work for their households. That is why most parents ended up being illiterate.

Katanga (2016:23) and Dikgale (2012:18) state that parents are obliged to carry out their responsibilities of being involved in their children's education successfully without any exception. Failure by the parents to carry out this obligation would have a negative impact on the child's learning. However, in practice, it is difficult for parents to meet these obligations because they are extremely limited in terms of education. As mentioned earlier that most illiterate parents in rural areas are found to be working long hours on farms as labourers with low incomes, they are poorly skilled and do not actually have time to focus on their children's education (Dikgale, 2012:21).

However, it is also the role of the SGB is to ensure that learners attend school. The support that parents need from the SGB as representatives of parents is to urge learners to attend school (Heystek (2011:462). According to Heystek (2010:101), the *South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996 (SASA)* stipulates clearly that it is the primary role of the parent to ensure that school attendance of every learner for whom the parent is responsible for is monitored. The *SASA, No. 84 of 1996* further stipulates that one of the SGB mandates is to ensure discipline and determine school times. In ensuring that, the SGB should encourage parents to be involved in their children's education. For instance, the SGB can ask parents to monitor their children's attendance, to help their children in doing homework and to monitor their children's

progress and to attend parents' meetings (Gwija, 2016:8). In this instance, the SGB is legally bound to enforce learner attendance at schools.

## **1.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY AT SCHOOLS**

Gwija (2016:9) states that in the past, rural schools, in black communities in South Africa were governed by school committees. These committees consisted of members that were not democratically elected. These members were just picked by headmen of the communities. These formed structures of management and governance were illegitimate and undemocratic (Gwija, 2016:9).

After 1994, South African parliament passed the *SASA, No. 84 of 1996* in order to address inequities and discriminatory practices, which were used in the schools before 1994 (Gwija, 2016:11; Heystek, 2011:457). In this Act, it is stipulated that parents are urged to send their children to school and they are responsible for their education and should ensure that their children attend school every day and are learning while at school. Heystek (2010:99) notes that the *SASA, No.84 of 1996* also mandated all public schools to have a democratically elected SGB. This SGB is composed of the principal, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents of learners and learners of that school.

According to Gwija (2016:33) and Heystek (2010:101), the SGB then becomes a legitimate structure that should stand in position of trust towards the school. Its role is to support the school principal, teachers, learners, parents and other staff members in the performance of the professional duties. Parents serving in the SGB, according to Gwija (2016:35), should perform their full role as per the *SASA, No. 84 of 1996* mandatory and undertake their full responsibility in standing in for other parents when performing the duties in the school. These duties or roles include adopting school policies, making strong and trusted decisions, drafting budget and most importantly, SGB should work in partnership with the school personnel towards attracting and motivating parents to be fully involved in their children's education and in giving their full support to teaching and learning in the school (Gwija, 2016:33). In short, parents together with the SGB should work in collaboration with the principal and teachers in the process of making decisions that will make the school to perform at its best ability.

### **1.3 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

A literature review, as defined by Taylor (2012:1), is an account of what has been published on a topic by researchers and scholars. Its purpose is to convey what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic. In this study, this section will focus on the literature review that outlines factors leading to poor academic performance amongst Grade 12 learners, as researched internationally, nationally and provincially, focusing on the school environment. Secondary sources will be reviewed, which include articles, policies, journals, books and the internet.

Department of Finance Mpumalanga (2013:1-39) reports on socio-economic challenges in Mpumalanga that Mpumalanga has the second-highest unemployment rate out of nine provinces in South Africa, with 354 000 unemployed people. Most of the people in Mpumalanga depend on community services and trade for a living. This is evidenced by the fact that Grade 12 results in the Bohlabela District in Mpumalanga lie on the second-lowest category of education, compared to other districts in Mpumalanga. Also in 2016, only 9,2% of the population of Mpumalanga were reported to have a post-matric qualification; 10,8% had no schooling at all; 36,9% had Grade 11; while only 26,6% had matric. This shows that poor performance in Grade 12 is due to poor socio-economic status. This is so because according to data recorded in Bushbuckridge Socio-Economic Development Report (2016:24), most parents' income in rural areas is solely social grants, being labourers for farmers and informal traders. Therefore, learners from such a background might not perform, because they are not likely to receive adequate basic things such as money and food and mostly their parents are more likely not to be fully involved in their education due to lack of time, financial constraints and maybe ignorance; hence, they are mostly illiterate (Myeko, 2010:51; Tsomo, 2012:43)

Tekete (2012:115) and Kwabena (2014:85) argue that poverty affects academic learner performance in such a way that households that lack assets such as houses and money means that children may be forced to leave school. If not forced to leave school, learning barriers are created, which can be associated with poverty. Poverty has an effect on learning because of the socio-economic backgrounds from which most learners in rural areas come from. Consequently, those learners end up being

psychologically affected and therefore fail to fulfil the necessary academic requirements (Kwabena, 2014:85; Katanga, 2016:17).

In addition, most studies show that cultural and social constraints in rural areas have a negative impact on learners' achievement level. This means that learners from socio-cultural backgrounds (which include initiation practices of both boys and girls and paydays for social grants) are subject to absenteeism and poor performance (Tekete, 2012:34). Dikgale (2012:16) argues that absenteeism contributes negatively to poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners at rural schools, in particular.

Furthermore, Katanga (2016:51) states that both local and international researchers are of opinion that factors such as socio-cultural issues increase learner absenteeism. Many studies including those in the case study by Paxson and Ableidinger (2004) indicate that there is a strong link between poverty and absenteeism. Some socio-economic and cultural reasons for learner absenteeism are teenage pregnancy; domestic chores; transport problems; child labour in rural areas, which may include farm work, herding cattle, fetching water and firewood, child abuse, and where parents need to go to work (Katanga, 2016:52). He further highlights that learners from a disadvantaged background are more vulnerable to chronic absenteeism than other learners are and serious care should be given to such learners in order to minimise chronic absenteeism (Tekete, 2012:35).

This absenteeism, according to Katanga (2016:17) and Dikgale (2012:17), has negative effect on learner performance. When learners are absent from the classroom, they are unable to complete and submit the assignments given to the other learners on those specific days where they were absent. This may result in learner underachievement or poor performance in different subjects (Katanga, 2016:28). Furthermore, when learners are not at school, their absence prevents them from obtaining the knowledge from the lessons or activities done on that particular day.

Sometimes, the school plays a major role in shaping the behaviour of the learner. The school that supports its learners by showing care, praising them and meeting their needs, this encourages learners to attend school more regularly (Katanga, 2016:28). By contrast, learners who feel that their school does not support them and does not even pay attention to their diverse needs have more attendance problems (Tekete,

2012:34). Overall, Katanga (2016:19) argues that learners who have a positive relationship with the school are more likely to have a good attendance record and succeed academically. Alternatively, when learners realise that their school does not care about their absenteeism, they may begin to believe that there is no need for them to attend school regularly. It is therefore very important for the school to create a good parent-school relationship by involving parents instead of ignoring the learner's behaviour. In terms of this teamwork strategy, schools would be continually in contact with parents concerning the learner attendance (Tekete, 2012:102). In addition, the SGB should maintain the discipline and involve parents in case of any chronic absenteeism.

Another factor that contributes towards poor performance of Grade 12 learners is the poor involvement of parents in their children's education. This includes poor communication between the school (Principal) that sometimes leads to learner absenteeism and high failure rate (Tekete, 2012:102). According to Katanga (2016:22) and Tekete (2012:62), where there is a lack of teamwork between the parent and the school, learners tend to take an advantage of such poor relationship between the school and parents and skip school regularly. The poor relationship between the school and parents could also affect the quality of teaching and learning negatively, as parents are reluctant to monitor learner and school activities (Katanga, 2016:21). It is therefore noted that parental involvement is a significant factor influencing excellence in education as well as learner achievement (Katanga, 2016:21).

Louw (2011:40), Tekete (2012:40) and Katanga (2016:21) maintain that parental involvement means support such as reading to a child; attend school meetings; monitoring home works and progress; restricting hours of watching television and checking on a child's attendance. According to Tekete (2012:71), in the *South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996*, it is indicated that the establishment of a School Governing Body (SGB) should be allowed to ensure the democratic participation of parents in the management of the school activities. Dikgale (2012:19) is of the opinion that the SGB of a public school must promote the best interest of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of a quality education for all learners at school. According to Dikgale (2012:18), the *SASA, No. 84 of 1996* emphasises the school-parent compact, which is a legislation that encourages schools to reach out to



parents by implementing practices that support strong parent participation such as flexible scheduling of home-school conference. The compact recognises that families and schools need to work towards mutual goals and that they share responsibilities for each learners' academic performances (Dikgale, 2012:18; Louw, 2011:86).

Dikgale (2012:18) and Tekete (2012:60) stress that the Act (SASA) stipulates and emphasises that a teacher should recognise that an educational institution serves the community. However, the SGB represents the interests of ordinary community members, teachers, learners and mostly parents in monitoring and overseeing the implementation of policies in the school and ensuring that teaching and learning is efficient and making sure that aims of the school are not divorced. Therefore, it is the main role of SGB to encourage parents to take the major responsibility in helping how learners should be prepared for adult life including the world of work (Amatea, 2013:24). The collaboration envisaged in the regard calls for a closer cooperation between SGB, principal and parents.

#### **1.4 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Mafuwane (2011:27) argues that the principal's leadership role is crucial to the academic achievement of learners. This leadership is necessary because it covers many different areas including leadership in general, teacher evaluation and learner discipline for the success of the learner. Mafuwane (2011:28) further states that a principal as a leader should be available to teachers, learners and mostly parents. By having a good relation as a principal with parents whose children have some issues such as discipline or progress, then it makes it easier to deal with such situations if parents are involved. However, the effectiveness of the principal's leadership and good parental involvement with good relations is measured by the academic success of learners and vice versa is true (Al-Ghanabousi, 2010:43).

The above is mostly observed and realised when there is a good relationship between the SGB and parents. Sambo (2016:37) believes that the SGB should have an influence on the involvement of parents in schools. He further states that the *SASA, No. 84 of 1996* stipulates that SGBs have the responsibility to motivate parents to perform their duties for schools. When problems occur in schools, SGB should arrange meetings with parents to discuss issues that affect the education of their children.

Boscole (2012:26) argues that SGB should also encourage parents to participate in school activities such as volunteering their spare time to teach cultural activities, like stories. SGB should also involve parents in the drafting of the year plans, whereby parents and teachers can plan activities for the year. Lastly, Boscole (2012:26) and Sambo (2016:37) maintain that SGB should involve parents in evaluating, managing and monitoring school projects. This will therefore, may give parents a sense of ownership and learners will also be motivated to attend school; hence, they see their parents being fully involved in the school.

According to Mahule's report on the Grade 12 results in 2016, Mpumalanga is one of the provinces in South Africa that initially produced poor matric results. However, there was a huge improvement in Mpumalanga matric results from 2011 to 2013, with 64% in 2011, to 77,6% in 2013. All schools in Mpumalanga improved in their National Senior Certificate Examination in 2013, but in 2016, there was decline in the Bohlabela Education District, Mkhuhlu circuit from 64% in 2015 to 51% in 2016.

Furthermore, the Bohlabela District covers a wide area characterised mainly by very poor rural areas and that include the Mkhuhlu circuit. According to Simelane (2010: 46), the Bohlabela District is rural. The majority of its population are women and children since most men migrated to cities or plantations in search of wage labour. Therefore, its population is under a great deal of strain as they are unemployed and lack income-generating skills. Moreover, research shows that in developing countries, dropouts and repetition rates appear to be the most common among learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. In such countries, causes of poor learner performance include poverty, absenteeism and lack of parental involvement (Tsomo, 2012:23). Tshabalala and Ncube (2012:5) argue that in their research findings, the causes of poor performance of learners in public secondary schools in Zimbabwe (Nkanyi District) were learner and teacher absenteeism, lack of parental involvement and lack of motivation. Even the study by Gakure (2013) on factors that affect performance of secondary schools in Kenya (Gatanga District) found poor parental involvement, poverty, lack of motivation and absenteeism to be contributing factors.

Therefore, in this study, the researcher wants to investigate the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools.

## 1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In view of the above background, Maluleke (2014:11) states that when parents, learners and other school stakeholders work in collaboration with one another in building a positive relationship, that helps them to reach and achieve their goals of improving the Grade 12 academic achievement. This can be done by making sure that there is effective teaching and learning, improved attendance and good behaviour. According to Maluleke (2014:11), parental involvement in schools in particular assists parents to be hands on in terms of their children's progress. It is also mandated by the SASA that parents should be represented in the SGB and the SGB should encourage parents to be fully involved in their children's education (Maluleke, 2014:11). This study will investigate, amongst other things, whether the school governance and parental involvement have an impact on raising the academic achievement of Grade 12 performance at Mpumalanga rural schools. The main aim of the research is to find out whether the sampled schools do involve parents in the education of the learners to raise the academic performance of the Grade 12 and how are they involved.

Therefore, the problem statement is as follows:

The effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement at Mpumalanga rural schools.

The focus of this research is on finding out how the SGB and parents at the schools under study work together to raise the Grade 12 academic achievement. Therefore, the main research question for my study is phrased as follows:

How could the SGB and parents work adequately together to raise Grade 12 academic achievement at Mpumalanga rural schools?

### *Sub-questions*

- What are the contributions of the SGB and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?
- What are the characteristics of an effective school governing body?
- Which strategies by the SGB and parents will be required to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?

## **1.6 THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools. Arising from the main aim, the following are the objectives of the study:

- To explain the contributions of the SGB and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools (to be addressed in the literature).
- To examine the characteristics of an effective school governing body (to be addressed in the literature review).
- To investigate the strategies that can be implemented by the SGB and parents to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools.

## **1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Mpumalanga Province has been one of the provinces that produced poor matric results. However, there was a huge improvement in Mpumalanga matric results from 2011 to 2016 with 64% (2011) to 77.1% in 2016 (Department of Education Technical Report on the 2013 National Senior Certificate Examination and Consolidated Oversight Report, 2017). According to the 2013 National Senior Certificate Examination Report, all schools in Mpumalanga improved. However, School A was reported one of the schools that were categorised as underperforming schools with below 40% pass. In 2016, School B was categorised as one of the underperforming schools at 45% pass (Consolidated Oversight Report, 2016).

School A and School B are in Bohlabela District, Mkhuhlu circuit. Bohlabela District, according to Consolidated Oversight Report, (2016) in the past years was regarded as the most improved district in the province after it recorded an improvement of 30% in the three years from 2013-2016. The challenge with the district was that it was performing far behind the rest of the other districts of Mpumalanga province which are Ehlanzeni, Nkangala and Gert Sibande Districts. Even in 2016, Bohlabela was still behind with 72.3% compared to Ehlanzeni (79.5%), Nkangala (79.5%) and Gert Sibande (75.9%). Bohlabela District basically covers a wide area that is characterised

mainly by rural areas that are very poor, which include Mkhuhlu where School A and School B are located

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the SGB and parents as far as the parental involvement is concerned. It also endeavours to close the gap on parental involvement strategies in rural secondary schools as a technique to achieve good Grade 12 results. This study was significant in promoting a pleasant relationship between the school, SGB and parents. It aimed to add value to existing knowledge about the effect of school governance and parental involvement in schools. It is hoped that the school personnel, SGB and parents will refer to the findings and recommendations in this study to supplement existing gaps in improving their techniques on working with parents for the benefit of teaching and learning and good performance in the Grade 12 results.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **1.8.1 Research paradigm, approach and design to be followed**

The researcher conducted this study in the constructivist paradigm. Constructivism, according to Lichman (2014:14), is a philosophical viewpoint when people construct their own understanding by reflecting on their personal experiences, and by relating the new knowledge with what they already know (Silverman, 2013:101). Therefore, the main idea of this paradigm is that learning is searching for meaning, therefore, to be effective; a teacher must help learners in discovering their own meaning.

However, this study is located within a constructive paradigm that considers the experiences of individuals as the main source for interpreting the reality of a phenomenon. According to Wahyuni (2012:71), a constructivist paradigm is an investigation of collective disciplines and a lens through which the researcher scrutinizes a natural phenomenon. The hermeneutics perspective of a constructivist researcher is the belief in multiple realities and an understanding of the existing experiences of the participants through subjective meaning that they attach to it (Lichman, 2014:14; Wahyuni, 2012:71). Within the constructivist paradigm, the researcher tries to make sense of the meaning of the participants' world by talking to them (Lichman, 2014:14). Thus, this research paradigm allows the researcher to

interpret the experiences, thoughts, and opinions of the participants in their own setting and cultural or social context. In addition, the researcher is able to provide a thick description of data to allow the reader to invoke a vivid picture of the circumstance of the study (Lichman, 2014:15).

Therefore, in this study, the researcher believes in the existence of multiple realities and has presented an interpretation of the insights, views and understanding of the participants' knowledge regarding the effect of school governance and parental involvement to improve academic performance of Grade 12 learners in the Mkhuhlu circuit, Mpumalanga.

The research approach to this study is a qualitative one. The qualitative approach was considered suitable for this study because it attempts to examine an incident in a usual location where the focus is on understanding the social incident holistically (Creswell, 2014:113). Qualitative approach concentrates on the meanings attached to particular viewpoints or contexts and since different people or groups often have different viewpoints, there are many different meanings regarding a particular phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:103). Since the research was seeking to probe the research setting in-depth to obtain a fuller understanding of the way things are and why and how the participants in the particular context perceive them, the qualitative approach used in this study assisted the researcher to explore the views from principals, teachers, SGBs, learners and parents about the importance of school governance and parental involvement in schools.

The researcher arranged the participants in a natural setting, which motivated them to share their thoughts and experiences with regard to the topic. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:58), qualitative research deals with observation, motivation, experience, thoughts, problems and behaviour as well as discovering, describing, comparing and analysing characteristics of a particular unit. Therefore, in this study, the researcher interacted with the principal, teachers, SGB, learners and parents to explore how SGB communicates with parents in order to enhance their involvement in school for better academic performance of Grade 12 learners.

The research design for this study was by means of a case study. Creswell (2012:97) describes a case study design as a research design in which the researcher is able to

explore the experiences of the research participants or organisations. A case study involves a systematic way of generating and analysing data. Creswell (2012:97) states that case study is a bounded system and the cases are studied within a specific period and research context. The multiple site sources of data enabled the researcher to evaluate the diverse experiences from different research sites by interviewing the different participants to acquire a more holistic picture of the problem being studied.

### **1.8.2 Population and sampling**

Tobias (2011:68) defines population as the target group one intends to study. Research population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which the results of the proposed study will be generalized (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2013:149). The target population for this study were the principals, teachers, SGB members, Grade 12 learners and parents in all three selected schools. This population group was considered appropriate for the study because it constituted the key role players responsible for the daily routine of teaching and learning in schools. Therefore, they were in the best position to supply the researcher with the information needed to give answers to study's research question.

Sampling, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:111), refers to the statistical process of selecting and studying the characteristics of a relatively small number of items from a relatively large population of such items, to draw statistically valid inferences about the characteristics of the entire population. Purposeful sampling was used for this study as it is recommended for studies focusing on few cases (Gay *et al.*, 2012:142). Three schools were a sample from a population of 10 public secondary schools in Mkhuhlu circuit of Mpumalanga. From each school, one school principal, one teacher, one SGB member, three Grade 12 learners and three parents were selected and that gave a total of 27 participants.

### **1.8.3 Data collection instruments**

The study used face-to-face interviews as data collection. Trochim (2011:46) states that a face-to-face interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people that can help one to gather valid and reliable data that are relevant to one's research objectives. Therefore, face-to-face interviews allow for personal communication and

make it possible to gather more information for one's study. Face-to-face interviews are divided into semi-structural (very loosely structured and consist of open-ended questions), in-depth (questions are least structured) and structured (administering questionnaires).

As highlighted above, the study used face-to-face interviews that were open-ended and semi structured, and revolved around central questions. This is more flexible and likely to yield information that the researcher had not planned to ask for. These interviews provided the direct evidence of the involvement contribution and cooperation of the main stakeholders, that is, principals, teachers, SGBs, Grade 12 learners and parents to ensure school effectiveness in terms of academic performance in rural schools of Mkhuhlu circuit in the province of Mpumalanga. Therefore, the above-mentioned participants represented all stakeholders in the study.

Various sources such as text and documents, both published and unpublished sources were collected, read and critically interpreted. Internet, magazines, newspapers, visual resources and artefacts, and oral traditions provide a wealth of information that was useful to the researcher (Booyse, Le Roux, Seroto & Wolhuter, 2011: 60). The researcher integrated different documentation as described by Booyse *et al.* (2011:86) with data obtained and the researcher attempted to add any other touches that might reside in these sources. In this study, data on the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools was collected through interviews with principals, teachers, SGB, learners and parents. The objective for gathering data from these five stakeholders was to validate the correlation between the parental involvement and the academic performance of Grade 12 learners in the Mkhuhlu circuit in the province of Mpumalanga. During the interviews, the researcher was able to hear things and recorded the findings rather than rely solely on the subjects' responses to questions. This generated a triangulation of data gathered to enhance its validity and strengthen subsequent analysis.

#### **1.8.4 Data analysis and presentation**

Data analysis is defined by Tobias (2011:93) as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. A qualitative study involves an inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis. To complete the



data analysis, certain steps were completed. Data collected were analysed by means of patterns and themes. In this study, the researcher made use of content analysis. Content analysis “is the categorizing and identifying of patterns and themes”. The processes of searching for patterns and themes was distinguished as pattern analysis and theme analysis, respectively (Creswell, 2014:342; Theron, 2014:4). This process was suitable for this study, because the structured interviews and document analysis yielded a vast number of notes. This process of content analysis helped the researcher to organise all the notes and themes from the data collected.

The analysis of qualitative data requires an accurate description of the responses of the participants. Pattern refers to findings that are descriptive by nature, while themes refer to a categorical form that interprets the meaning of the pattern (Creswell, 2014:343). Creswell (2014:343) argues that, through content analysis, one can gather meaningful findings. Content analysis makes sense of multiple interview transcripts and pages of field notes to identify major patterns of outcomes from separate cases (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011: 5). Therefore, for this study, responses of interviews were sorted into broad patterns. These patterns were then divided into themes. The categories of patterns were further divided into sub-patterns and points of comparison was extracted in order to draw conclusions on how involved parents are in the education of their children and this was from the data of the responses of participants and document analysis. The reliability of coding patterns was assessed by checking for contingency between different coding points.

## **1.9 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Maswanganyi (2010:12) states that to ensure credibility, the researcher should reflect on his or her actions during the interview. The researcher as the key participant in the research process has to establish what contributions to make and how to make them based on the experiences and opinions he or she has, which influence the research process, such as interviewing the participants. It is also argued (Mohamed, 2010:65) that the ability and effort of the researcher determines the credibility of a qualitative research. Such credibility ensures consistency when the study is undertaken by different researchers under different research sites (Anney, 2014:272).

Trustworthiness in qualitative research means that the research ensures that research findings are accurate. This is achieved with appropriate research procedures. The truthfulness of the research findings occurs throughout the research process. Trustworthiness is one of the pillars of qualitative research as it determines whether the research findings are accurate from the researcher, the participants and the readers' perspective of the study (Anney, 2014:1273). Mohamed (2010:71) supports this view by arguing that qualitative research's examination of trustworthiness is of great importance in ensuring reliability of the study. He further states that the trustworthiness of a research report is grounded on discussions centred on validity and reliability.

The concepts of validity and reliability, when properly used in qualitative studies, reflect effective and efficient ways of establishing the truth. From the researchers' perspective, validity means establishing whether the research accuracy measures what it is intended to measure to attain solutions to the research problem. Furthermore, it is the extent to which the study measures an intended problem area, where the results are dependent upon the expertise and knowledge of the researcher. Golafshani (2013:104) describes validity as the determination of whether the research truly measures what it intended to measure and how truthful the research results are. According to Punch (2011:132), the quality of qualitative research is completely depended on the closeness to the truth of what is happening, rather than missing out important parts. Truthfulness in qualitative research can be enhanced by triangulation. In this study, multiple methods of collecting data were applied. They included interviews and analysis of documents.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delport (2003:168) view reliability as "the accuracy or precision of an instrument, as the degree of consistency or agreement between two independently derived sets of scores or the extent to which independent administration of the same instruments yields the same results under comparable condition". From the researchers' viewpoint, reliability is the extent to which a study consistently measures whatever it measures. The preceding definition implies that if the study is repeatedly conducted using the same data collection methods, the same results will be produced.

Paton (in Golafshani, 2013:120) advocates the use of triangulation by stating that it strengthens a study by combining research methods. It implies using several kinds of methods or data, such as quantitative and qualitative approaches or multiple data collection methods. In this study, triangulation gave the researcher an opportunity to investigate the research fields from different perspectives. It was convenient for the researcher to make similarities and differences of the data collected and the responses given.

In this study, the following strategies were used to ensure credibility and trustworthiness:

**Crystallization:** - refers to the practice of validating results by using multiple methods of data collection and analysis (Maree, 2010:87). In qualitative research, the term crystallization turns to be more appropriately used than triangulation, as it is a convenient way that ensures efficient data collection and analysis in qualitative research. Data were collected using interviews and document analysis.

**Member checks:** - All the data collected from the investigation were transcribed verbatim and was given back to the interviewees for verification, as well as to ensure that whatever statements given during the interview were accurate.

## **1.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The researcher took measures to ensure that research ethics were complied with in this study. The following issues received the researcher's considerations:

### **1.10.1 Permission to conduct a research study**

Researchers need to get the necessary permission from relevant authorities before a study is conducted (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:125). For this study, the researcher applied for permission from the Mpumalanga Department of Education head of Department, the Mkhuhlu circuit manager and to three selected schools' principals to conduct the study.

### **1.10.2 Informed consent**

McMillan & Schumacher (2010: 118) assert that informed consent implies that adequate information on the goal of the study, the procedures that were followed, the advantages, disadvantages and the dangers the participants might have been exposed to and the researcher's credibility were disclosed to the participants. In this study, the researcher informed the participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. They were also provided with detailed information about their roles in the study, including the purpose of the study.

### **1.10.3 Confidentiality**

The researcher ensured that the participants are not identified in anyway by any person who will be reading the study. Data collected from the three schools and the participants were handled in a confidential manner. Only the researcher was aware of the identity of the participants. These three schools were labelled as School A, School B and School C to protect the identity of both schools and their staff members. Kobus (2010:244) states that "confidential information provided by research participants must be treated as such by researchers, even when information enjoys no legal protection or privilege, and no legal force is applied".

### **1.10.4 Anonymity**

The participants' right to privacy should be ensured. Responses to interviews should be recorded without names and identifiable data. In this study, the researcher will make sure that anonymity is protected, as the subjects' identity will not be linked with their personal responses, as affirmed by Fouka and Mantzorou (2011:92). Pseudonyms were used in the transcriptions of interviews while codes were also used in the presentations of findings from interviews with principals, teachers, SGB members, learners and parents of Schools A, B and C.

### **1.10.5 Protection of the dignity of participants**

The researcher ensured in this study that the protection of the dignity, right, safety and well-being of the participants take precedence over the investigation and the researcher's interests. Any form of harm, stress on participants was avoided at all costs. This is in line with Fouka and Mantzorou (2011:133), who advocate the idea

that a researcher must consider all possible consequences of the research and balance their risks with impartial benefit.

## **1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

### **1.11.1 Academic achievement**

Academic achievement is also known as academic performance. It is the outcome of education and the extent to which a learner, teacher or institution has achieved its goals. It is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment. Academic performance has been linked to differences in intelligence and personality. Learners with a higher mental ability as demonstrated by IQ tests and those who are more conscientious tend to achieve high academic results (Bossaert, Buyse & Doumen, 2011: 75).

### **1.11.2 Attitude**

Petty and Tomala (2012:56) define attitude as a predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object or person, or situation. They further state that attitude influences an individual's choice of action and responses to challenges, incentives, as well as rewards (together called stimuli). There are four major components of attitude, i.e. affective, cognitive, conative and evaluative.

### **1.11.3 Parents**

Parents are referred to as adult males and females who care for children attending schools. A parent can be a biological or social caregiver of a child or according to Van Wyk (1996:8) a parent is a person who has care, custody and control over and concern for the child.

### **1.11.4 School governance**

According to the Youth Group Fact Sheet 4 (2011:1), school governance is related to the establishment of policies and rules for the school and its constituency, that is, teachers, non-teaching staff, learners and parents. In short, it is all about making decisions that will give direction on how the school should be run. The Youth Group

Fact Sheet 4 (2011:1) further states that school governance is the SGB's responsibility.

#### **1.11.5 School governing body**

According to the Gwija (2016:28), the SGB is a statutory body of parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and learners who seek to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the school community and thereby enhance teaching and learning.

#### **1.11.6 School management**

School management, according to Zengele (2011:90), can be defined as those managerial activities performed by teachers and other educational managers, which make effective classroom instruction and, therefore, self-actualisation of learners, possible. The teacher's managerial tasks, such as policymaking, planning, decision-making, leadership and control, must take place together with instructional activities if the ultimate aim of school management as the self-actualisation of learners can be achieved.

#### **1.11.7 Socio-economic status**

Socio-economic status is a combined economic and sociological measure of a person's work experience and of an individual or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education and occupation. Gollnick (2013:145) states that socio-economic status is typically broken down into three categories, i.e. high, middle and low.

#### **1.11.8 Rural schools**

Rural schools are schools that located in the remote parts of the country. Usually these parts are far from cities and towns. These schools, in most cases are located in areas with harsh living and working conditions which are mostly not conducive to the process of teaching and learning (Shikalepo, 2018:26).

### **1.12 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

It would be ideal to investigate the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools in the whole region of Bohlabela, however, time, logistics and finance made this investigation limited to only three schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit.

According to Gwija (2016:17), delimitations in a study are those characteristics that limit the scope and define boundaries of the researcher's study. Therefore, the delimitation of the study was the population size and the number of participants. The researcher addressed this delimitation by collecting information about a number of secondary schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit, which provided an accurate picture of these schools. Ideally, the researcher could have examined every school, principal, teacher, SGB member, parent and learner in the circuit. However, the research sample of one principal, one teacher, one SGB member, three Grade 12 learners and three parents of three participating schools were drawn from many secondary schools in Mkhuhlu circuit under the Bohlabela Education District. The rationale behind this selection was that since the Mkhuhlu circuit has more secondary schools than other circuits in the region, the study would assume that this investigation might be similar to what prevails in the other schools within the circuit.

### **1.13 PLANNING OF THE STUDY: CHAPTER OUTLINE**

Chapter 1 introduces the study by providing information in terms of background, purpose statement, rationale and the significance of the study. It presents the identified research questions and discusses the research aims, theoretical and conceptual framework. A brief literature review is given and the research methodology, research paradigm, research design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, credibility and trustworthiness, ethical issues and limitations and delimitations are outlined.

Chapter 2 is a more in-depth discussion of the relevant available literature in terms of the influence of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in rural schools.

Chapter 3 presents the research methodology, research approach, research design, research population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, credibility, trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 consists of findings of the research. Topics, themes and categories that emerged during the analysis of the data are discussed in detail.

Chapter 5 provides an overview and summary of the study; conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made.

## **1.14 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has introduced the study by providing information in terms of background, purpose statement, rationale and the significance of the study. It presented the identified research questions and discussed the research aims, theoretical and conceptual framework. A brief literature review was given and the research methodology, research paradigm, research design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, credibility and trustworthiness, ethical issues and limitations and delimitations were outlined.

The following chapter is a more in-depth discussion of the relevant available literature in terms of the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement at rural schools.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1 provided the background and overview to the study. In this chapter, a theoretical framework on the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in rural schools will be presented. The reason the study made use of the theoretical framework instead of a literature review is that in a theoretical framework, a researcher becomes conversant with himself or herself to the relevant literature. In that way, the researcher is allowed to use theories to direct the study and organise knowledge and data to answer the research questions effectively (Grant & Osanloo, 2014:12-26).

Grant & Osanloo (2014:12-26) and Herbert (2016:42-44) further state that theoretical framework strengthens the study because of its explicit that permits the reader to evaluate critically. It connects the researcher to existing knowledge and it helps in identifying the limits to those generalisations. Hence, it articulates the theoretical assumptions of a research study that forces the researcher to address questions of why and how and also, according to Herbert (2016:42-44), it permits the researcher to intellectually transit from simply describing a phenomenon that the researcher has observed to generalise about various aspects of that phenomenon (Grant & Osanloo, 2014:12-26).

Therefore, generally, the theoretical framework is used to limit the scope of the relevant data by focusing in a specific variable and defining the specific viewpoint that the researcher will take in analysing and interpreting the data to be gathered (Herbert, 2016:42-44). Herbert (2016:42-44) and Grant & Osanloo (2014:12-26) maintain that theoretical framework facilitates the understanding of concepts and variables according to given definitions and builds knowledge by validating or challenging theoretical assumptions (Herbert, 2016:42-44).

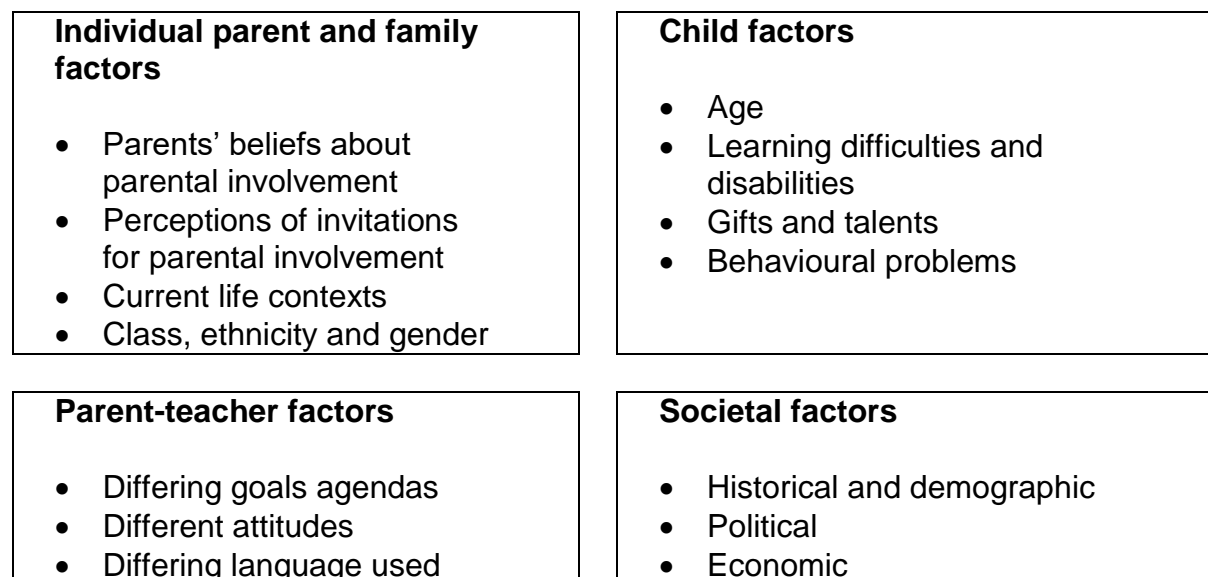
Furthermore, according to Herbert (2016:42-44), the theoretical framework determines what kind of information and evidence is needed to answer the research questions and this is very important in steering the study towards the right direction as well as to

indicate the coherence and boundaries of the study (Herbert 2016:42-44; Grant & Osanloo, 2014:12-26). Therefore, this assisted the researcher in locating existing or related studies that could serve as a basis for the study at hand and critically review existing knowledge with regard to the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools. In this chapter, the researcher reviewed the role of school governance and parental involvement nationally and internationally by scrutinising global literature on the role of school governance and parental involvement in improving the learners' academic achievement. Therefore, the researcher perceived poor parental involvement as a result of four major barriers that are outlined by Hornby and Lafaele model below.

## 2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: HORNBY AND LAFAELE'S MODEL

There are four major barriers to parental involvement that are outlined by Hornby and Lafaele (2011:39). These barriers are namely, individual parent and family factors, child factors, parent-teacher factors and societal factors.

Figure 2.2: Model of factors acting as barriers to parental involvement (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011:39)



Hornby and Lafaele (2011: 39) argue that individual and family factors indicate that different parents have different beliefs about parental involvement and that can lead to ineffective parental involvement. Nevertheless, parents need to be encouraged by

teachers to be fully involved in the education of their children (Epstein, 2001). Furthermore, Green et al. (2007:532) state that the parents' level of education does have an influence on how they think about their importance in the education of their children. The more they have knowledge, the more they engage in parental activities.

The child factor is the second barrier as it points out the issue of age that sometimes act as an obstacle to parental involvement. This is because when children grow older, parents tend to be less involved in their education (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011: 43). In most cases parents of children with learning difficulties, behavioural problems and disabilities tend to be less involved in their education than children who are gifted and talented (Fan, Li and Sandoval, 2018:123).

According to Hornby and Lafaele (2011: 44), the third barrier includes agendas and goals that parents and teachers set for the children. This barrier is called parent-teacher factors. In this case, teachers view parental involvement as a way of improving academic achievement and financial gain. On the other hand, parents think being involved is a way of to understand the school better (Hourani et al., 2012: 133). Both teachers and parents should share same grounds with regards to attitudes and the language they use. This means that teachers should regard parents as professional partners who are aiming at developing the education of children (Hornby and Lafaele, 2011: 47).

Hornby and Lafaele (2011) noted that the last barrier of effective parental involvement, known as societal factors. Historical and demographic, political and economic influences play a huge role in parental involvement in this barrier. The improvement of parental involvement is ignored, as there is no money that is allocated for that. There are no programmes and training in place that are meant to prepare the teachers and schools in improving parental involvement (Sanders, 2006: 45).

The poor school governance and parental involvement in schools could be understood better by taking into consideration the barriers to parental involvement. Hornby and Lafaele (2011: 47) outline the Hornby and Lafaele's model where parent and family, child, parent-teacher and societal factors are viewed as the main factors that play a huge role in the academic achievement of learners. Therefore, the heart of this model is that parents' beliefs about school and different agendas that parents and teachers

have about learners' education as well as the socio-economic issues of parents are the contributory factors in the poor involvement of parents in the children's education.

In line with the above, this means that teachers, parents and learners should work harmoniously to achieve better academic achievement. This may be done by encouraging parents to support their children in doing their school work and improving communication between the school and home on the education of children.

## **2.3. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE ACROSS THE WORLD**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

Since the adoption of the *South African Schools' Act 84 of 1996 (SASA)* resulted in the introduction of democratically elected SGB in South African school, the then school committees were given to the SGB after 1994. The SGBs as statutory bodies ensure the participation of teachers, learners, other staff members and mainly parents of the public schools in South Africa (Gwija, 2016:9). According to the SASA (1996:16), the SGB has power vested in it as far as the governance of the school is concerned. The principal, together with the school management team (SMT) has formal legal authority in terms of the management of the school, such as daily activities of the school, decisions about learning material, teaching methods or class assessments to be used regardless of whether a teacher is paid by the SGB or not (Gwija, 2016:11).

It is however, very important to note that the SASA requires SGB members in the public schools to play an important role in curriculum issues, although it is not made explicit how they should do this. On the other hand, it is also imperative to look at the development of school governance in other countries in order to understand how they handle these key areas, that is, school governance and the role of involving parents in schools and how the involvement of parents in the education of their children improve the Grade 12 academic achievement. The experiences of other countries in this field will also assist the South African authorities to review some parts of its school governance policies. Therefore, this section will briefly outline school governance development and parental involvement in England, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Russia, India, China, Australia, New Zealand, Madagascar and Singapore.

### 2.2.2 England

The new legislation of education system in England (*Education Reform Act of 1988*) brought about significant change to the ways that schools used to be governed (Gayatri, 2013:105). According to Gayatri (2013:105), all governors were given equal rights and responsibilities within the governing bodies, which included the governing bodies having more powers over learner discipline, school finances, admission policy and staff appointment (Gayatri, 2013:105). This led to two types of governors promulgated; that is, elected governors and appointed governors, each serving for at least four years (Gayatri, 2013:108). These governing bodies consist of parents, teaching staff and local authorities. In spite of the above, there are sub-committees appointed by the governing bodies to take care of finances, human resources, school development and health and safety and these sub-committees have to provide reports to the governing bodies (Gayatri, 2013:108).

Gayatri (2013:110) states that in England, a governing body is obliged and mandated to establish the following strategies:

- Set the mission and vision of the school
- Set policies for achieving aims and objectives
- Appoint head teacher
- Present financial statement each year end
- Prepare annual budget for the school
- Prepare admission policy
- Determine the selection of school uniform
- Monitor all educational matters
- Hold meetings with parents
- Fundraising
- Management of school funds
- Provide support to learners, parents and school

- Learner discipline.

### **2.3.3 Finland**

Gayatri (2013:91) contends that in Finland, the school governance is done by the municipalities that ushered in the establishment of school boards for schools. These school boards are accountable to the municipalities in a specified area (Gayatri, 2013:91). The school boards are also known as councils, which consist of mainly parents (majority) and governors, from 15 to 30 members that serve for three years.

According Gayatri (2013:91), the primary goal of these school boards was to ensure that there is equal representation for all stakeholders in making decisions. The school boards have responsibilities, but they vary from school to school, depending on the school's needs analysis conducted at each school (Gayatri 2013:91). In fact, the school boards were the state agents. School boards in Finland do not work in isolation but they are influenced by the municipal governance. For instance, if a problem or challenge emerges, the municipal governance would provide support to the school (Gayatri; 2013:91). In essence, Gayatri (2013:91) argues that more powers lie on municipality governance in matters like finances, school budgets and financial planning for the effective governance and management of the school. The boards' composition is the principal, deputy principal, parents, academics, auditor, human resource members and fundraising or marketing members (Gayatri, 2013:93).

Gayatri (2013:94) highlights the following responsibilities as the responsibilities of the school boards in Finland:

- Present audited financial statements
- Maintain the development of the school and recommend staff appointment to the municipality.
- Outline the school discipline policy for learners
- Assist in curricular and co-curricular activities
- Assist in maintaining school buildings (repair and alterations)
- Exploit a strong influence on educational development in the school

#### **2.3.4 Denmark**

A school board in Denmark ensures that parents influence each school (Country Report Denmark, 2010:34). The composition of the school boards is about five to seven parent representatives who are elected by parents that have children enrolled in the school. As in South Africa, the learners are also represented by the elected two learners in the school board. These school boards conduct its activities directed by the targets and framework laid down by the municipal board that supervise and oversees all the activities of the school. In short, according to Moos, Kofod and Brinkkjaer (2014:23), the school board does not set its own target and frameworks but the municipality is the one that does the planning.

The Country Report Denmark (2010:36) and Moos *et al.* (2014:23) argue that the duties of the school board are as follows:

- Stipulates the principles of activities of the school (e.g. home-school cooperation and subject options)
- Approves budget of the school
- Teaching materials are approved by them
- Submit the recommended teachers to the municipality for the appointment
- Any question from the school, which the school board submit questions to the municipality for clarity

Nevertheless, all ethnic groups are encouraged to become members of the school boards, especially the minority-group parents and learners (Country Background Report Denmark, 2010:36; Moos *et al.*, 2014:23).

#### **2.3.5 Sweden**

The Country Background Report for Sweden (2016:3) indicates that the education system; that is, the curriculum, national objectives and guidelines for the public education system are laid down by the government. The municipality or boards of independent schools should determine how schools are to be run. The Country Background Report for Sweden (2016:3) claims that after the framework has been

established by the municipality, it is the duty of the school to work within those frameworks to achieve the goals established. However, the main governors of the schools are the municipalities and the principals of the schools, because they are responsible for the financial management and to do the follow-up on all the school's activities (The Country Background Report for Sweden, 2016:4).

However, according to The Country Background Report for Sweden (2016:4), the National Agency for Education (NAE) is responsible for syllabi and assessment but the schools' inspectors are responsible for assembling the permits and performance (The Country Background Report for Sweden, 2016:4). There is now a proposal that the education system should be decentralised so that teachers, learners and parents can have a good opportunity to participate and exercise their influence in the education system. However, at some schools, parents established several parents' organisations that included the Sweden Alliance of Parents, whose mission was to promote a greater cooperation between parents, schools and other community members and that they should have a say in the education system (The Country Background Report for Sweden, 2016:21). However, The Country Background Report for Sweden (2016:21) notes that there is still none of the parents' organisations has any official role in the education system of Sweden.

### **2.3.6 Russia**

Schooling in Russia is mainly managed by governing boards in terms of parental involvement (Country Report Russia, 2018:91-100). The governing board is elected by public franchise and is known as school governing board. The role of the school governing board is to make decisions and policies and making sure that parents and the community members are represented (Country Report Russia, 2018:91-100).

Country Report Russia (2018:91-100) states that the school governing boards in Russia composed of mothers who are not working and with very little experience in management or sometimes it would be the principal's friends or anyone that had no threat to the principal (Country Report Russia, 2018:91-100). Country Report Russia (2018:91-100) further highlights that the responsibility of the school governing board is limited to the deployment of employees, deployment of extra budget ,and that is the only reason that led to challenges emerging as the consequence of the lack of



common legislative in the school governing board(Country Report Russia, 2018:91-100).

However, most schools in Russia are governed by the school governing boards and in those schools that are governed by the school governing boards are very effective. The governed schools train their school governing boards and equip them by giving them the handbook that is clear and understandable on how the school governing board should work. These handbooks also teach the school governing boards on how to do audit for the school in order to develop the school (Country Report Russia, 2018:91-100).

### **2.3.7 India**

In India, parental involvement is through the school boards. According to Covey (2014:10), a school board is a cooperate body, a legislative source of all decisions. The board members are guided by the Education Act to perform their duties. Their responsibilities are to bring the concerns of parents, learners and supporters of the board and to be in consultation with them in terms of the plans of the board (Covey, 2014:13).

The following are the duties of the school boards according to Covey (2014:13):

- Maintain a focus on learners' achievement and well-being.
- Make informed decisions.
- Serve as the role model for the education system and the community.
- Policy making.
- Recruit staff.
- Implementation of policies.
- Communication between the school and the parents.
- Allocation of resources.

### **2.3.8 China**

Schools in China have the unique status that they are state-owned but governed by parents. This ensures that the school has excellent relations with the local government in the governance issues like finance, curriculum and staffing (Moody, 2011:1). The governing board known as the board of governors is composed of nine voting members; seven out of nine members are appointed and two of them are elected (Moody, 2011:1).

The board of governors' duties include policy development, strategic planning and making financial decisions such as investments, fees and salaries. However, other board of governors' duties are monitored by the director appointed by them. These duties highlighted by Moody (2011:2) are as follows:

- Approves major facilities development
- Approves budgeting
- Discuss financial issues and gives financial reports
- Approves curriculum
- Approves policies on learners' performances

### **2.3.9 Australia**

Austen (2012:73-81) states that the large of governance is done by the school board that is composed of variety of stakeholders that have a large role to play in terms of managing and being accountable (Austen, 2012:73-81). This school board has a responsibility of making sure that communication is effective with stakeholders. Austen (2012:73-81) argues that the composition of the board consists of five to nine members, who include parents with professions such as legal, educationalist, accounts, general business perspective and also the inclusion of the representatives of rural parents and even members active in faith. It is the recommendation of the minister to include or mix professions with different necessary skills. According to the study by Austen (2012:73-81), the school boards in Australia are inducted before they resume their duties, although it is not really formal but informal. The department has a policy and handbook that school board members use during induction and the policy is explicit on how the school board should work (Austen, 2012:73-81).

The main duties of the school board are to monitor the running of the school (Austen, 2012:73-81). Since the boards are elected democratically, they need to manage resources effectively, maintain communication between learners, parents, teachers and the community at large (Austen, 2012:73-81).

### **2.3.10 New Zealand**

The school board in New Zealand is the board that is given power under the *Education Act 1989* to control the management of the school (Kerr, 2013:8). It is the legal body with obligations to govern the school in accordance with regulations of the state and within the charter of the school. According to Kerr (2013:8), the board is entrusted on behalf of all stakeholders to work and account for the performance of the school (Kerr, 2013:9). The board ensures that the strategic leadership of the school, setting of the vision for the school and policy compliance is emphasised (Kerr, 2012:9).

The boards, therefore, work hand in hand with principal and it is very important for both the stakeholders to understand every policy document for the effectiveness of the school (Kerr, 2013:9). Kerr (2013:9) further argues that the board should be proactive than reactive when its operating and making decisions but do not need to involve themselves in the administrative details on the day-to-day running of the school but the board has a right to ask questions to know what is happening (Kerr, 2013:10). The functions of the board are as follows:

- To perform its functions and exercise the power bestowed on them to make sure that every learner achieves the highest possible standards in academic performance.
- To control and govern the school (Kerr, 2013:10).

### **2.3.11 Madagascar**

Every school in Madagascar has a Parent Association that is responsible for hiring and managing teachers that are on contracts. The election of Parent Association representatives is done by parents during the general assembly that is normally held annually. In Madagascar, fees were abolished, but the Parent Association is allowed to raise local contribution, to cover the salaries of the contractual teachers (Carr-Hill,

2017:9). Over and above, the school councils are the ones that govern the schools in Madagascar. In the composition of these school councils, there are common patterns, frequency of attending meetings, common roles and responsibilities and decision-making. The inclusion of parents in the school councils and school activities makes an overall assessment of the school-based management interventions a success (Carr-Hill, 2017:24).

In the composition of school councils, parents are in the majority, with the principal as chairperson or secretary. It also includes at least one or more teachers. Sometimes ex-learners are also included. As mentioned earlier, in addition, many schools in Madagascar may also have parent associations that may or may not be formally involved in the school council (Carr-Hill, 2017:9).

The responsibility of the school councils, according to Carr-Hill (2017:7), is to:

- Make decisions in developing the schools.
- Influence the non-budget of the school.
- Develop the three to five-year school improvement plan.
- Develop work year plan.
- Maintain the infrastructure.
- Hire and fire teachers, especial contractual teachers.
- To do some pastoral duties and ensuring discipline of learners and staff and also do conflict resolution (Carr-Hill, 2017:9).

### **2.3.12 Singapore**

Singapore schools operate under the legal entity, the *Singapore Companies Act*. Members of the school participate in the governance of the school by electing at least 12 members to be school board members. The school board, according Tan (2017:9), is composed of volunteers who serve for three years and they must be members of the Singapore American School, but not employees or spouse of employees of the school. However, members are responsible for the strategic oversight of Singapore

American Schools (SAS). There are also sub-committees responsible for finances and school features, of which some school board members participate.

The school board has powers and responsibilities vested in them. According to Tucker (2016:12), they are:

- To ensure that the school policies support the achievement of the school's mission and values, but the board members liaise with the superintendent, whose responsibility is to administer the operations of the school.
- To conduct planning for the improvement of the school (e.g. increasing role in fundraising).
- Hire the school's superintendent, and provide support and supervise the superintended performance

### **2.3.13 Summary**

According to the literature above about the international school governance, it is clear that the systems are not the same. However, it is noted that in some countries there are similarities in terms of school governance. Some countries call the boards, school boards, some call them school councils and some call them school governing boards. As far as the involvement is concerned in countries like Sweden and Finland, parents are involved but they either have a say or not. Mostly the authority lies with the municipalities. However, in countries like Australia, school governance preferably considers people with relevant skills, though even parents from rural areas are also recognised. Therefore, South Africa can adopt some of the good practices of some countries like Australia.

## **2.4 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.4.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to (Thekiso, 2013:20), "school governance generally is not a new concept and practice in South Africa". This is because according to Thekiso (2013:20) during the old political dispensation, there was a body or school committee that existed known as the Parent, Teacher and Student Association (PTSA). It was established by the

*Bantu Education Act of 1953* at different community schools, and played a huge role in assisting the principals in running schools. However, the role of the *PTSA* was limited to signing of school cheques and contract forms of newly appointed teachers as well as monitoring and accompanying learners on school trips (Thekiso, 2013:20). These typical school committee members of the past were just there to endorse the authority of the principal. For instance, they could not decide on the curriculum of the school and the medium of instruction to be used at the school. According to Thekiso (2013:21), this means that this kind of school governance lacked legislative backing from government and was less democratic in structure.

With the democratisation of South Africa in 1994, the above-mentioned governance system (*PTSA*) became unpopular and outdated, since it did not involve representatives of all the major role players, e.g. parents, teachers, school supporting staff and broader community by which the school is surrounded (Gayatri, 2013:45). Above all, the vast disparities in South Africa among schools led to the necessity of establishing the new structure of school governance, which would be transformative, inclusive, flexible and democratic in order to accommodate the different contexts within which schools operate (Gwija, 2016:10). According to Gayatri (2013:53), school governance that is transformative, inclusive, flexible and democratic refers to a democratically governed school system that creates at least partnership among all school stakeholders (principals, teachers, learners, parents, state and community) and the inclusion of parents as most important constituents of the SGB. The transformation that is stipulated in the *South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996* was also to eradicate the previous racially divided society into a free, democratic state (Gayatri, 2013:53).

Gayatri (2013:53) and Gwija (2016:11) further state that as part of efforts to make schools democratic, the *SASA* was passed in 1996. An important provision in the Act was the establishment of democratically elected SGB. Hence, the *SASA* allows the establishment of an SGB to ensure the democratic participation of parents in the management of the school activities. Dikgale (2012:19) is therefore of the opinion that the SGB of a public school must promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of a quality education for all learners at the school. This means that the school should reach out to parents by implementing

activities that will support strong parent participation such as flexible scheduling of home-school conferences where parents and teacher will discuss the academic issues of learners (Rubiana, 2014:10). This is the main reason why the SASA, according to (Dikgale, 2012:20), emphasises the school-parent compact, as it recognises that both the school and the families need to work together collaboratively towards mutual goals and that the responsibility is shared for each learner's academic success.

#### **2.4.2 Composition of the School Governing Body**

As mentioned earlier, in the past, school governance in South Africa was characterised mainly by a top-down approach where teachers, learners, parents and communities were excluded from making important decisions about schools (Sambo, 2016:40; Education Rights Project, 2012:2). In fact, only schools that served white communities gave parents a chance in decision-making, contrary to schools serving the black communities (Gayatri, 2013:7; Mchunu, 2012:6). This, according to Gayatri (2013:8) and Mchunu (2012:7) was because of the racially based system of education that was used then. After 1994 this eventually led to the establishment of the SASA that was passed in 1996, which was to ensure that SGB of the school was elected democratically (Mchunu, 2012:7). The Education Rights Project (2012:2) notes that there were mainly two important principles of the SASA; that is, inclusivity, which meant the participation of teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions and decentralisation, which meant that decisions ought to be made by people who are closest to the situation. These above-mentioned principles are very important in this study because the moment parents are involved in the academic matters of their children, even the learners' academic performance will be enhanced and will be improved. This therefore gave the SGB power to make some decisions.

The SGB structure is seen as a platform for the parents and the community members to contribute to the transformation of education at the grassroots level. Gwija (2016:36) and Hayes (2012:567) argue that the SASA spells out clearly that the SGB of every public school must comprise members who are elected by the community, the principal in his or her official capacity and co-opted members (not elected by community members).

Therefore, in accordance with the *SASA*, the membership of the SGB is made up of elected members, the principal and co-opted members. According to (Gwija, 2016:36; Hayes, 2012:567), elected members of the SGB comprise individuals from each of the following categories: parents of the learners of the school, teachers at the school, members of staff at the school who are not teachers, and learners in Grade 8 or higher. Furthermore, the Education Rights Project (2012:3) and Nyambi (2005:21) argue that SGBs are allowed to co-opt members from the community if they feel the person can make a good contribution to their functioning. Mabusela (2016:11) stresses that co-opted members should bring a dimension to the SGB that other members cannot readily give. However, co-opted members do not have any rights to vote in the SGB. It is noted that a parent who is employed at a school may not represent parents, meaning that those parents can only represent either teachers or members who are not teachers (Education Rights Project, 2012:4).

Nyambi (2005:22) and Hayes (2012:567) state that parents should form the majority in the composition of the SGB and there should be one parent more than the total of all other members combined. The higher number of parents in the formation of an SGB is based on the fact that the *SASA, Act 84 of 1996* clearly states that since parents were deprived of their right to decision-making in their children's education, the Act's main purpose is to make sure that South African parents have a democratic right to take a leading role in the SGB, as they have the majority vote, in school governance. It is important to note that, according to Gwija (2016:35), the number of parents, teachers, non-teaching and learner members who sit on a governing body depend upon the size of the school enrolment as well as whether a school is a primary, secondary or combined school. For example, a secondary school with more than 629 learners will have ten parent members, three teachers, two non-teaching members and three learners (Mpumalanga Department of Education, MDoE, 2012:20). In line with the above, the *SASA* provisions as outlined earlier indicate that parents as people with children at every public school must be given much say on how the school must run for the sake of their children and the community at large (Mabusela, 2016:11).

Basic Education Rights (2010:29) argues that the members of an elected SGB are required to elect office bearers amongst themselves. These office bearers must at least include a chairperson, a treasurer, and a secretary. It is further within the



members of the SGB also to decide to have additional office bearers, for example, a vice-chairperson. Even the establishment of other committees such as executive committee that is made up of experts (e.g. a financial committee) is the responsibility of the SGB.

Governors normally serve for three years except the chairperson, treasurer and secretary but additional office bearers cannot serve for a period of more than a year without re-election (Basic Education Rights, 2010:79). This therefore means that during these three years, if for whatever reason, any member ceases to qualify as a governor, he or she automatically ceases to be a member of the SGB. It is noted by the Education Rights Project (2012:5) that the provision for limits of term does not only make office bearers accountable but also offers community members, parents and teachers the opportunity to stand for elections and serve their community and the school in particular. Above all, the *SASA* does not necessarily put a limit on the number of times that a person can serve as an office bearer of an SGB.

The establishment of SGBs with the inclusion of parents, teachers and learners, specifically at secondary schools clearly demonstrates the government's commitment to democracy. This is supported by the Basic Education Rights (2010:79) that stresses that this will help improve the involvement of people in making decisions that affect their lives and therefore, has a vital role in spreading democracy. SGBs were instituted with the aim of entrenching democracy and instituting representative governance, which, it is strongly believed will enhance the effectiveness of schools and therefore improve the quality of education (Basic Education Rights, 2010:79).

Zulu (2013:12) states that representation of these stakeholders in the governing body of the school (SGB) is a positive move in the effort to achieve aims of democratisation, which includes participation. This participation in education, according to Gwija (2016:36), is formed to achieve better education for all learners. The idea of giving significant powers to parents in decision-making, gives pre-eminence to the concept that decisions about managing are best taken by those people closest to the users of services, that is, parents, teachers and learners (Gwija, 2016:36).

### **2.4.3 Functions of the SGB**

Zulu (2013:12) states that the education governance was highly centralised during the previous political dispensation until after 1994, where the school governance was decentralised. The rationale for the decentralisation of school governance, according to section 10 of the SASA (1996:16), was to place the real authority of school governance in the hands of broad representatives of local communities. This by implication is to grant local communities opportunities to become more responsive to local educational needs.

Cotton (2011:6) supports this view because the decentralised school governance or, what others call site-based management, could reduce inefficiency and unnecessary delays in decision-making. The main aim of the decentralised school governance (site-based management) and shared decision making strategies was to directly challenge and seek to change the complex and well-entrenched patterns of institutional and individual behaviour that have remained unscathed by top-down reforms (Thwala, 2010:41). The SASA (1996:20) prescribes a whole lot of functions to be performed by the SGB and gives it considerable amount of powers to perform such functions.

In view of the above, the SGB functions as a unit, although individual members have individual responsibilities and it is allowed to set up committees in order to fulfil its tasks effectively. SGBs are therefore, given functions according to their experience, knowledge and capacity (Sambo, 2016:33). This means that an SGB member that demonstrates the capacity, knowledge and expertise to execute the mandatory rural secondary school's functions, may be allocated certain functions over and above ordinary functions (Gayatri, 2013:57).

#### *2.4.3.1 The ordinary functions of the SGB*

Ordinary functions according to Education Rights Project (2012:9) are functions that all SGBs must perform and the following are ordinary functions of the SGB:

- **Develop admission policy:** Education Rights Project (2012:7) and Gayatri (2013:58) point out that the SGB is expected by the SASA to make a decision on the admission policy of the school. It is very important for an SGB to make sure that an admission policy does not discriminate unfairly based on race, religion, language, gender and social class. There should be no way that learners can be excluded from admission (Gayatri, 2013:58).

- **Language Policy:** it is the SGB's duty to decide on the language used at school. The language policy must at least allow and promote multilingualism in the school as stipulated in the South African Constitution (Education Rights Project, 2012:7).
- **Religious Policy:** According to Gayatri (2013:58), the school's SGB must establish the religious policy and should be in line with the South Africa's Constitution. The SGB should ensure that the religious policy does not discriminate any religion or anyone and all religions to be treated equally. The SGB should make sure that there is no force or pressure put on any member of the school to participate in any religion (Education Rights Project, 2012:7; Gayatri, 2013:58).
- **Code of Conduct:** Duma, Kapueja and Khanyile (2011:48) and the Education Rights Project (2012:8) argue that there should be an accord in the adoption of a school code of conduct between or in consultation with learners, parents and teachers. The school's code of conduct should not be in disagreement with the South African constitution or any law passed by national and provincial government, which protects learners (Duma *et al.*, 2011:48). This means that as much as the learner attendance and discipline is emphasised in the code of conduct, but the rights of learners should not be ignored and violated, for instance, corporal punishment not to be used and pregnant learners not to be denied an opportunity to learn (Duma *et al.*, 2011:48; Education Rights Project, 2012:8).
- **Adopt a constitution:** The school's constitution must be adopted by the SGB, and should not oppose the South African constitution and laws of the country. Whatever that the SGB would be doing, will then be guided and governed by the adopted constitution (Gayatri, 2013:58). Things that are included in the constitution are SGB meetings every term; SGB meetings with parents; minutes and reports (Education Rights Project, 2012:8; Gayatri, 2013:58). The Education Rights Project (2012:8) states that it is the mandate from the SASA that the SGB must submit the copy of the adopted constitution to the Head of Department (HoD) within 90 days of its election.

- **School development:** The Education Rights Project (2012:9) and Gayatri (2013:59) note that the development of the school is dependent on the SGB by ensuring that all members actively work to improve the school and avoiding any doing that will compromise the school. For instance, determination of school fees, preparation of financial budgets, maintenance of bank accounts, establishment of school fund and making sure that the school community is informed about the usage of the school fund (Education Rights Project, 2012:9).
- **Mission statement:** The SGB with the school community should put in writing what they consider to be the purpose and the values of the school that give direction, that is, the mission statement. For the mission statement to be able to hold all stakeholders together and accountable, all the views of the stakeholders in the development of the mission statement should be considered (Education Rights Project, 2012:9).
- **School functioning:** According to Education Rights Project (2012:9) and Gayatri (2013:59), the principal, teachers and other staff members of the school should be fully supported by the SGB in order for them to perform their duties fully. This is one of the SGB functions to make sure that the school functions properly (Gayatri, 2013:59).
- **The school day:** The school times are determined by the SGB. The school times should not be in distinction with the law of the country and staff should not be forced to work outside the stipulated working hours. However, if there is a need, the SGB should engage with the concerned employees in terms of working outside hours (Education Rights Project, 2012:9).
- **Property administration:** Gayatri (2013:59) claims that the administration and control of the school's property, buildings, and grounds is the main priority for the SGB. In short, the SGB should ensure that they look after the school's property. But according to the Education Rights Project (2012:9), the above function is limited in the sense that the SGB is not allowed to make physical alterations and additions to the existing school property but the only thing the SGB can do is to inform the provincial department about the alterations and additions that need to be done (Education Rights Project, 2012:9)

- **Voluntary services:** It is put in the hands of the SGB to make sure that it encourages parents, learners, teachers, and other staff members to render at least voluntary services for the school's improvement (Duma *et al.*, 2011:48).
- **The Education Rights Project** (2012:9) claims that these voluntary services can be fund-raising, but without force.
- **Appointment of teachers:** The SGB, according to Duma *et al.* (2011:48), can recommend the appointment of teachers at the school to the Head of Department (HoD) and the HoD can either employ or not employ the candidate recommended by the SGB. Above all, the SGB has vested powers to recommend the appointment of teachers (Education Rights Project, 2012:9).

#### 2.4.3.2 *The allocated functions of the SGB*

Allocated functions are functions that are performed by the SGB with the granted permission by the Head of Department (HOD) to perform them (Education Rights Project, 2012:14). These allocated functions of the SGB according to Education Rights Project (2012:14) are to:

- **Maintain and improve the school's property and grounds:** As it was discussed above under the ordinary functions of the SGB, the SGB can only do alterations and additions in the property with permission to perform this allocated function (Gayatri, 2013:59). The government is the one that decides who does that alteration and addition and pays those involved (Education Rights Project, 2012:14).
- **Determine the extra-mural curriculum and subject options of the school:** Education Rights Project (2012:14) argues that the SGB can determine the extra-mural curriculum and the subject options for the school but that should be strictly in line with the curriculum policy from the department.
- **To buy textbooks, educational material or equipment for the school:** Unless the school has not been given permission to perform this allocated function, the government is responsible for the buying of teaching and learning material (Thekiso, 2013:35).

- **To pay for the services to the school:** Education Rights Project (2012:14), Gayatri (2013:59) and Thekiso (2013:35) maintain that SGB should pay for services to the school, but that is limited to the permission granted to them. In case where the SGB is not granted permission to pay for services, such as rubbish collection, water and electricity, the government does the payments (Thekiso, 2013:35).

#### **2.4.4 Summary**

As this study seeks to establish the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools, the SGB, as the body that is elected democratically by the school community, needs to perform their functions to their full potential. Therefore, the SGB needs to instil trust, honesty and transparency among themselves and parents for the effectiveness of the school. It is however, very important to note that the SGB should not only guide learners but support the principal, the staff and the parents as well inside and outside the classes by performing both ordinary and allocated functions honestly.

### **2.5 THE GOVERNING ROLE OF THE SGB IN THE SCHOOL**

#### **2.5.1 Introduction**

Creese and Earley (2012:161) point out that section 16 of SASA (1996:16) states that the SGB must support the principal, teachers, other staff members, learners and parents as well as playing their roles in the success of the school. This indicates that the SGB does not manage, but governs. According to Gayatri (2013:62), governance is referred to as the collective decision of the SGB in managing the school matters and making sure that they are solved. Therefore, the SGB, in terms of governance, stands in a position of trust; hence, they represent the whole school community; that is parents, teachers, learners, the staff of the school and the community that the school serves and they set out the direction for the school through the formulation of policies, monitoring the adherence of those policies and the implementation. Gayatri (2013:62) highlights that governance entails the controlling and monitoring of the school for its success and effectiveness.

### **2.5.2 The responsibility of the principal on the SGB**

Gayatri (2013:62) and Thwala (2010:43) argue that the difference is very clear between the governance, which is the SGB's responsibility and then the professional management of the school is the principal's responsibility. This means that the day-to-day organisation and management of teaching and learning and all daily activities that are in support of teaching and learning are the principal's responsibilities (Thwala, 2010:43). Although powers in terms of tasks regarding governance and property are invested in the SGB, the effective use and resources development in a school are solely dependent on the professional leadership skills of the school principal. Therefore, in the SGB, the role of the principal is to make sure that financial and professional responsibility is carried out as derived from the provisions of the SASA, which clearly states that school principals should assist SGBs in the execution of their functions (Thwala, 2010:43). It is highlighted by Gayatri (2013:62) and Thwala (2010:43) that the school principal's role functions within the authority of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and oversees in the professional management of the school. In short, a principal has a huge influence on the school's life; hence, there are tasks that need a leader like a school principal who possesses skills. These include time management, financial accounting, human relations, target definition and setting, appraisal and change management in order to be able to perform functions like planning, resources allocation, quality control and checking of performance against the plan (Thwala, 2010:45).

However, Gayatri (2013:63) states that the main functions of the SGB and principals cannot be divorced as they are interwoven and intertwined. This is because making a clear distinction between governance and management is very difficult, as many decisions in the school require both the inputs of the SMT and SGB. That is the main reason, according to the research is that tension emerges when the SGB and the principal do not understand or confuse the function of governance and management (Gayatri, 2013:63). However, governance (SGB) and management (Principal) should ensure the effective and efficient running of the school (Gayatri, 2013:63; Thwala, 2010:44).

### **2.5.3 The supporting role of the SGB**

Although some SGB members are semi-literate or illiterate, it makes it difficult for them to make distinction boundaries of their operation (Creese & Earley, 2012:161). However, governors should make it clear that they are not there to try catch the head or stakeholders but to support, explore, promote a spirit of enquiry within the school. In supporting the principal and other stakeholders, mainly parents to improve the school in general and school performance, particularly. The SGB members can advise, guide and direct the principal on issues relating to conflict resolutions, improvement of learner motivation and encouraging parents to be involved in their children's education (Creese & Earley, 2012:161). Gayatri (2013:65) and Nonyane (2016:50) note that as discussed earlier, the school governance is viewed as an act of determining policy and rules by which need to be organised and controlled by the school, to ensure effectiveness. This implies that the supporting role in the SGB promotes the best interests of learners and parents. To be exact, the SGB should be responsible for the development of strategies for ensuring that quality education is provided for the learners and that parents are fully involved in the education of their children (Nonyane, 2016:30). The SGB does the monitoring to check the implementation and identifies the gaps in the process and the principal's responsibility is then to find some strategies to close those identified gaps (Nonyane, 2016:68).

Another most important function of the SGB is to determine the school's code of conduct (Gayatri, 2013:65). Though the code of conduct is formulated in concurrence with teachers, learners, parents and the SMT, it is supposed to be adopted by the SGB afterwards. Therefore, the SGB is mandated by the SASA that all learners need to be admitted to school and to conform to the school's code of conduct. According to Gayatri (2013:65), the code of conduct should ensure that the school rules are fair and realistic, and that disciplinary proceedings are formally applied in the case of offense. Therefore, the SGB's intentions in this regard are to establish and conserve strong working relationships among its stakeholders and to promote respect (Nonyane, 2016:68). That is the reason that gives the SGB the right to suspend the learner after a fair hearing (Gayatri, 2013:65).



#### **2.5.4 Summary**

SGBs are by nature critical structures for the effective teaching and learning in schools. The different component members thereof have to fulfil their core functions and make sure that they promote the best interests of the child in the school. Though the SGB has some challenges in terms of finances and staff appointment, it is very important to note that SGBs have successfully being able to manage school assets, maintain discipline, establish the mission statements of the schools and raising funds.

### **2.6 DETERMINATION OF SUBJECT OPTIONS AND THE EXTRA-MURAL CURRICULUM BY SGB**

#### **2.6.1 Introduction**

Ditebe (2015:21) states that the SGB of the school is also required to determine the extra- mural curriculum and choice of subject options, according to the national curriculum policy. For this to occur there must be a functional curriculum committee that is familiar with the current curriculum development, and legal documents that guide the extra-mural curriculum programmes of the school. These programmes should serve the purpose of enhancing the school's educational programmes. According to Ditebe (2015:21), the success of the extra-mural curriculum can be achieved by drawing up the timetable and making sure that safety measures are in order together with the funds to cater for these activities. In view of the above, though the SGB often knows little about larger issues that are curriculum related and they sometimes lack expertise within the field of education and can therefore not play a meaningful role in curriculum issues, it is very important to consider that the SGB is a juristic person legally responsible for the decision it makes based upon the functions and powers devolved.

#### **2.6.2 The role of the SGB in determine subject options in terms of the curriculum policy**

The SGBs of schools are required to choose subject options according to the curriculum policy (Department of Education, 2010:18). This function is stipulated in the SASA that the SGB have a say in choosing the learning area or subjects. According

to the Department of Education (2010:18), the subject packages should be broken down into basics in order to assist the SMT and the SGB in drawing up the timetable.

Therefore, the timetabling committee of which the SGB forms part, should be familiar with current curriculum development so that they are able to make a final decision on the subjects to be offered (De Lange & Howard, 2010:15). However, De Lange and Howard (2010:15) argue that there are so many factors that need to be considered by the SGB and SMT when choosing the subjects. The following factors are noted by De Lange and Howard (2010:10) and the Department of Education (2010:18):

- Number of teachers at the school, which is determined by the enrolment;
- The teachers' qualifications, abilities, expertise and also experiences;
- The learners' requirements;
- The expectations of the community which the school is serving, for instance, the school cannot offer Sesotho language where there are no Sesotho-speaking people in the area, offering at least tourism subjects in an area that has a lot of tourist attraction areas, or the SGB might consider agricultural related subjects in the area where farming is the main economic activity; and
- The availability of physical resources such as computer laboratories if they have to offer computer subjects or the kitchen if consumer studies subjects are to be offered (De Lange & Howard, 2010:10; Department of Education, 2010:18).

### **2.6.3 The role of the SGB in determine the extra-mural curriculum in terms of the curriculum policy**

According to the Department of Education (2010:17), the SGB's function in determining the extra-curricular activities need to demonstrate that the extra-curricular activities and extra subject like life orientation's Physical Education (PE) are well managed and that they enhance the educational programme of the school. For instance, Department of Education (2010:9) states that timetable should be properly done and safety measures and funds should be adequate. This therefore, means that the SGB should be well equipped in skills such as administrative, financial, human resources, legal, and consultative skills and those skills will help them to roll out their

participation in the extra-mural curriculum activities (Department of Education, 2010:9).

According to the Department of Education (2010:9), the popular extra-mural activities that are practised in the rural areas are choral music and sports, but mostly sports. Competitive sport forms part of elevating sport programmes that provide continuous learning opportunities that engage learners in activities that fully support, develop and transfer applied competence to the learner from the curriculum context to sustainable development of the learner and the community at large, like soccer, netball, cricket, etc. Therefore, the Department of Education (2010:9) claims that it is the duty of the SGB to make sure that the PE and sport are part of the extra-mural curricular activities offered by the school (Department of Education, 2010:10).

The Department of Education (2010:10) and Department of Education (2012:10) state that above all, the basic role of the SGB in extra-mural curricular activities is to:

- Draw up the budget and make provision for school activities;
- Provide sports facilities and equipment;
- Ensure that educators are supported to offer school sport activities;
- Participate in selecting and approving school sport codes;
- Participate in the compilation of the school sport policy and school sport plan;
- Determine the school sport programme and the calendar at the school;
- Support and monitor school sport activities; and
- Elect sport committees.

#### **2.6.4 Summary**

Parents as partners do not normally find the involvement in curriculum matters easy as they view it as the professional involvement that needs teachers. However, as parents and SGB are involved in decision-making, they represent the interests of the community members, teachers and learners in monitoring the implementation of the curriculum in the school. Parents and the SGB need to make sure that the aims and objectives of the school are observed in every way possible.

## **2.7 ENHANCEMENT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT BY SGB**

### **2.7.1 INTRODUCTION**

The *SASA 84 of 1996* mandates and instructs parents to be fully involved in the governance of schools (DoE, 1996). This was in view of the fact that there were challenges in the school governance before 1994 due to lack of a positive working partnership between the school personnel and parents of learners at South African schools (Gayatri, 2013:43). Gayatri (2011:43) and Gwija (2016:9) state that in essence, parental involvement in South African education system is considerably based on improving the education quality. This therefore, means that the SGB, according to Lemmer (2012:83-96), should represent the interest of the members of the community, teachers, learners and mostly parents in monitoring and overseeing the overall implementation of policies in the school and ensuring that teaching and learning is efficient and making sure that aims and objectives of the school are not deserted (Gwija, 2016:36).

### **2.7.2 Democratic election of the SGB**

Gayatri (2013:47) and Sambo (2016:33) argue that, according to the *SASA*, parents should be represented through the SGB that is democratically elected. This is so because, according to Gayatri (2013:47), in South Africa under the apartheid regime, policies were only favourable to white South Africans; hence, these policies were established under the leadership of the National Party from 1948 until 1994 (Gayatri, 2013:47; Sambo, 2016:33). These policies emphasised bureaucracy, discrimination, centralism and inequality. This affected the education system hence the then education system was hierarchical and non-participative and characterised only by minimal teachers, parents, non-teaching staff and members of the community's participation (Sambo, 2016:33). The governance of education then was entirely dependent on the state and the principals and inspectors were the only people that had powers to run the schools, such as appointment of teachers and control of funds (Gayatri, 2013:44).

Gayatri (2013:44) and Sambo (2016:33) contend that in 1953, the introduction of the new education system called *Bantu Education Act No.47 of 1953* was done with the

intention of giving at least a chance to parents to participate in their children's education. In spite of new Act, still white ascendancy was dominant in a sense that committees and boards emerge. Not every stakeholder was represented and this kept all the disadvantaged, especially black parents, learners and teacher having no say in the education of their children (Gayatri, 2013:44).

Thekiso (2013:17) states that after 1994, the SASA was established to litigate the promotion of the democratic transformation and to stop the inequalities of the apartheid regime. The essence of the Act (SASA) was to radically reform and transform the South African education and to involve all stakeholders in the system that included parents, teachers, learners and community members in governing the school (Gayatri, 2013:51; Thekiso, 2013:17). Since the democratic elections in 1994 gave birth to the SASA, it mandated democratically elected SGBs. These SGBs created in order to democratise and decentralise the education system; to decentralise the decision-making powers; self-managing schools and to share responsibilities and accountability among the stakeholders of the school (Gayatri, 2013:7). Education Rights Project (2012:3) maintains that the SGB should be democratically elected by the school community (teachers, learners, parents, non-teaching staff members and community members) as the body that represents them as the school community and stakeholders (Gwija, 2016:10).

### **2.7.3 Collaboration between school and parents**

Ngcongo (2016:46) states that the child depends mostly on the three stakeholders involved, that is, the teacher, learner, and parent. Therefore, if any of the stakeholders is not properly involved, the learner may suffer. However, Lemmer (2012:83-96) contend that discipline for learners is important and mainly needs parental involvement. Therefore, the SGB as the parents' representative should encourage parents to work in partnership with teachers (Ngcongo, 2016:46). This, according to Ngcongo (2016:47), will allow the parents to know how to be productively involved in their children's education at each grade level. This kind of contact between parents and the school will make it possible for parents to reduce the characteristic isolation of their role and it will make parents to be assured that teachers share their concerns about children. In turn, Ngcongo (2016:47) claims that for teachers to know that

parents recognise or realise the complexity of their role in the classroom becomes so comforting to teachers. The benefit of this collaboration and complement is that teachers' work can be easily done and involved parents may have a more positive view of the teacher and the school, and involved parents might give more support to teachers (Ngcongco, 2016:47).

However, Lemmer (2012:83-96) argues that the SGB as the representatives of parents, should play a huge role in encouraging and enhancing parents to take a major responsibility in helping how learners should be prepared for adult life including the world of work (Lemmer, 2012:83-96). This is essential because according to Gwija (2016:7,) parents have a natural part to play in supporting their children in their school work, such as building the self-esteem of their children, monitoring home works and school work, and even doing the school visits to check on their children's progress. In case where a parent is an expert, a parent can use his or her expertise to help the school, this can be professionally related where a parent can come to the school and motivate the learners (Gwija, 2016:7). Gwija (2013:41) claims that parents can also organise career guidance or exhibition that will help learners in terms of programmes to choose concerning tertiary education (Gwija, 2016:41). Amatea (2013:24) highlights that the collaboration envisaged in the regard calls for the SGB to encourage a closer cooperation between the school and parents.

It is the role of the SGB to advance and enhance the educational goals of the school and as governors of the school and parents' representatives. The obligation is on the SGB members to promote and complement the work of the teacher. Gwija (2016:28) notes that the role of fostering and enhancing the educational goals of the school to parents and learners must encourage learners to learn and parents to show a high level of commitment in their children's education through direct and indirect involvement in teaching. The SGB may further entreat the voluntary service of parents who have expertise in particular challenging subjects of the school such as Mathematics, Physical science, Accounting, etc. (Gwija, 2016:30; Amatea, 2012:78). It is further argued by Gwija (2016:38) that the SGB and the involvement of parents in a situation where none of their members or parents can teach such subjects, the SGB, with the help of parents, can create an SGB post until the department offers the grant to the school to appoint the teacher permanently.

In view of the above, the SGB's main function is to make recommendations in the appointment of teachers, to control the use of school funds and to encourage parents, teachers, learners and non-teaching staff members to participate in fund-raising (Thwala, 2010:43). Therefore, Thwala (2010:43) argues that school fund where schools are still paying school fees is the one that can be used to pay the SGB recommended teachers. However, since most of the rural schools are no-fee schools, the general collection of school fees is no longer applicable to the SGB. Therefore, the Minister of Education must annually determine the schools that are "no-fee" schools by notice in the *Government Gazette*. The SGB may then motivate that allocated funds can be used to pay the SGB teachers (Thwala, 2010:43). However, the SGB can still encourage parents to engage in fund-raising activities for the payment of teachers until the department absorbs those teachers (Education Rights Project, 2012:10&Thwala, 2010; 43).

Lemmer (2012:83-96) claims that the balance between parents' role and the school's role regarding the child's schoolwork should be in symmetry, in order for a learner to acquire good academic performance. However, this denotes that the SGB, with the school, should design some measures to help parents in establishing conducive home environment for learners to learn. These measures of making homes conducive to learners that the SGB need to advice parents to do to make homes conducive to learners to learn, according to Gwija (2016:8), are:

- To be primary teachers at home.
- To be caregivers and child protectors.
- To be counsellors and career advisors.
- To be good listeners to adolescent thinking and best friends.
- Progress monitors.

It is the duty of the SGB, according to Amatea (2013:85), to encourage schoolteachers to allow parents to play their expected role at home and at school. The SGB, together with the school should develop strategies to improve parental involvement in their school and to improve the role of parents in the school. In short, the SGB have a task of building the relationship between them, teachers, learners and parents in their

schools. The SGB can do this by devising strategies for involving parents such as keep on reminding them about the activities that they had plan in the beginning of the year with all the school stakeholders and encourage parents to participate in those activities (Gwija, 2016:40). The following are the activities to be included in the strategic planning (Lemmer, 2012:83-96):

- Parents must play their role of communicating with the school personnel concerning the progress of their children at and school.
- Parents have to attend meetings as required and planned by the all the stakeholders (SGB, parents and principal and staff) concerning their children's progress and behaviour.
- Parents have to be involved in the making of policies.
- They have to protect their children and be aware of everything that their children are going through socially and academically
- As part of the policy makers, they should have good knowledge of policies and serve in the school, for instance, volunteering and committees.
- They need to give support to both their children and the school (teachers and the principal).

According to Lemmer (2012:83-96), the SGB's strategic plan activities for parental involvement mentioned above can create a provocative school climate thus improving parent and teacher instruction in elements of parental involvement. Lemmer (2012:83-96) further notes that the SGB and the school have to encourage teachers and parents to improve their means of communication with learners especially at home. This communication includes informing parents about school programme and learners' progress, and parents should be able to contact the school about their children's life. Furthermore, the school may make use of newsletters, report cards, telephone calls to parents, home visits and conferences (Sambo, 2016:20).

Furthermore, the section 16 of SASA (1996:20) stipulates that SGBs have the responsibility to motivate parents, teachers and learners as well as non-teaching staff to perform their duties for schools (Boscole, 2012:15). For example, when problems occur in schools, parents who serve on SGB, together with other members, should



arrange meetings to discuss issues that affect the education of their children. SGBs should encourage parents to participate in school activities, such as volunteering to perform manual work by helping to clean the school and by volunteering their spare time to teach cultural activities, like drama, traditional songs and stories (Lemmer, 2012:83-96). This means that parents serving on the SGB have the power to influence parental involvement in schools.

In view of the above, the SGB at the beginning of the year may involve parents in the drafting of year plans whereby parents and teachers can also plan excursions for learners and other projects that can be of importance for the school and learners. Epstein (2010:81-86) argues that the SGB must make sure that parents are involved in evaluating, managing and monitoring projects which may basically give those parents a sense of ownership in their children's education. To enhance parental involvement further, SGB members are required to ensure that parents attend school meetings throughout the year, check the performance of their children, and motivate their children to complete their homework and study their work, which will improve the academic performance of their children (Sambo, 2016:25).

#### **2.7.4 Summary**

However, according to the SASA (1996:31), all parents (literate or illiterate, rural or urban) are given powers to govern schools through the SGBs. In short, with the power bestowed on them, parents are expected to perform their duties that affect and sustain the smooth, efficient and effective running of schools. The powers that parents have in the education of their children, has a significant positive impact the performance of their children.

### **2.8 THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING PARENTS IN SCHOOLS**

#### **2.8.1 Introduction**

According to Gwija (2016:33), school performance is part of the general improvement of a school. However, school improvement is about more than simply getting the best results, but it is not easy to see how governors can contribute to the raising of standards when they do not actually teach learners, but their engagement largely contributes to improving the school performance. Therefore, for a school to be

successful; that is, obtaining good results in examinations (both internal and external), important stakeholders, particularly the SGB and parents in general contribute to that (Gwija, 2016:42). This means that the improvement of school performance is, thus not exclusively the teachers' responsibility but the parents' as well. The role of parental involvement in improving Grade 12 academic performance may cover matters relating to curriculum issues, communication and general support for the school principal and the staff.

### **2.8.2 Curriculum Issues**

Curriculum, according to Shumane (2009:24), is a total guided learning experience designed to facilitate learners' learning for the establishment of the quality relationship between what is learnt and what operates outside the school. In short, curriculum is a planned teaching and learning activities or programmes for which an educational institution is responsible. It covers all that is considered necessary to be taught to learners by a school (Johnson, 2013:1-27).

According to Johnson (2013:1-27), it is very important to note that the curriculum represents what society wants or expects from education. Therefore, Johnson (2013:1-27) highlights that curriculum as explained above, embraces all the elements of education provided by the school in order to achieve educational goals. These elements include content, teaching, learning, assessments and rules for the curriculum implementation (Erlendsdottir, 2010:24). However, the SGB has the responsibility to foster and enhance the educational goals of the school so as the representatives of parents, they should also encourage parents to promote and compliment the work of the teacher (Erlendsdottir, 2010:24)

The SGB, working with other parents, can organise career exhibitions programmes for learners in order to boost their motivation, hence in most rural areas, school children do not have sufficient information on career options, which has a negative impact on learners to continue learning and that affects their performance (Lemmer, 2012:83-96; Johnson, 2013:1-27). By being involved in curriculum issues, parents can further, in collaboration with the school, invite professionals like academics, doctors, etc, to talk to learners about their professions (Gwija, 2016:38). That kind of information can motivate learners positively, because they will want study hard to be like them and,

according to Gwija (2016:38), children will be able to make informed decisions on choosing their careers in tertiary education.

Including parents in the decision-making process has received a great deal of attention in the remodelling of educational strategies (Bagarette, 2012:97-106). This suggests that when parents are empowered to participate in their children's education it can have a direct influence on curriculum delivery, because they feel accountable for the academic performance of their children (Sambo, 2016:43; Bagarette, 2012:97-106).

Though school principals do not always welcome parental involvement in schools, Bagarette (2012:97-106) explains that Senior Management Teams (SMTs) and teachers have a tendency of underestimating the involvement of parents. They believe that the role of parents in decision-making should be limited to voting and serving in the SGB and that they should not have a direct influence on curriculum delivery. Therefore, according to Sambo (2016:43), this misunderstanding that exists between parents and schools with regard to decision-making as far as curriculum issues are concerned in schools should be reduced.

Cordero (2015:76) recommends that principals should allow parents to participate in decision making on all matters that affect them and the education of their children, and that schools must understand how parents can be included in decision making at certain levels. This is because if schools do not trust parents, this can disturb their relationship and ultimately this can lead to a loss of support from parents because parents will feel inferior and they will feel it is only the responsibility of teachers to be involved in the learner education (Gwija, 2016:43).

Katanga (2016:29) and Sambo (2016:48) argue that, according to literature, parental participation is perceived as a way to improve the quality of education. In order for a school to educate children effectively, parents and families should become fully involved in the process of educating learners. This is evidenced by many researchers that parental involvement affects attainment in core subjects such as reading, mathematics and science, the behaviour of learners, the attendance of learners and the attitude and adjustment to school life (Sambo, 2016:48).

Furthermore, a school is successful when there is a strong and positive relationship amongst teachers, parents and the community (Katanga, 2016:29). This can help to

minimise learner absenteeism, completion of homework, monitoring of children's whereabouts and discussion with children about school. Learner absenteeism can be minimised in a way that, according to Katanga (2016:28), parents should share the equal responsibility with the teachers in terms of monitoring the learner attendance. Katanga (2016:28) and Gwija (2016:42) maintain that the contribution of parents in the education of their children is very significant and crucial for learners to achieve better academically. Therefore, in short, parents should ensure that children attend school regularly, maintain regular contacts with the school and volunteer at the school if necessary (Gwija, 2016:42). To manage absenteeism, parents should find out what their children study at school on a daily basis and spend some time in supervising and helping children to complete their homework (Katanga, 2016:29; Gwija, 2016:42).

### **2.8.3 Communication**

Effective communication refers to the process of understanding and sharing information. Even listening is most important and plays a major and important role in the improvement of learners' performance (Johnson, 2013:1-27; Sambo, 2016:46). According to Sambo (2016:48), parents believe that good communication should be a two-way process, where someone will speak and listen to them and treat them as worthy of consideration and respect. Most schools communicate face-to-face with parents on the basis when parents visit the school, and during parents' meetings and consultations to inspect their children's academic progress, via written forms of communication like letters, telephone and short messaging services (SMSs). However, in rural areas, communication between the parents and the school is done mostly through the parents' meetings (Sambo, 2016:25).

For effective communication, teachers are encouraged to listen when communicating with parents and respect should be shown to parents without interrupting them, while speaking as some parents take offense and feel it is a sign of disrespect (Jooste, 2011:2). Erlendsdottir (2010:32) concurs with the above, because the quality and effective communication between parents and teachers improves parent-teacher relationships. Therefore, schools should find better ways to communicate with parents, which motivates them to participate in the education of their children. It is also noted by Johnson (2013:1-27) that if schools make the effort to encourage ongoing

communication with the parents, the academic performance as well as the behaviour of learners will also improve.

Johnson (2013:1-27) maintains that learning in children starts at home before they enter school and continues when they start attending schools. This means that learners learn in and out of the school or classrooms. Therefore, parents should assist in teaching children at home and link whatever learnt at school with what they learn at home. Johnson (2013:1-27) and Michael, Wolhuter and Wyk (2012:57-82) add that parents should ensure that their children are well taken care of at home and at school. Parents should also teach and guide their children through various aspects of life, such as showing respect, being hardworking, acquiring acceptable behaviour and encouraging them to learn (Michael *et al.*, 2012:57-82)

However, teachers mostly provide professional skills, while parents are mostly concerned with their children's ongoing development (Michael *et al.*, 2012:57-82). Therefore, it is vital for parents and teachers to share their ideas regarding the learners with one another and they will achieve best ways of providing skills that will lead to success. However, this can only be possible if there is regular communication between parents and teachers that enhances trust between the two parties, which is very important in building a positive partnership.

Michael *et al.* (2012:57-82) argue that collaboration between parents and teachers enhances chances of assisting children successfully and becoming involved in school activities. This collaboration or partnership involves helping and showing an interest in the homework of their children, assisting the school with specific tasks and even serving in the SGB. Michael *et al.* (2012:57-82) suggest that, at the beginning of the year, teachers and SMT should involve parents in discussing issues regarding academic progress of the learners, and Gwija (2016:36) recommend that parents and teachers should consistently share their thoughts and ideas about the learners' education throughout the year. Therefore, this kind of communication will assist parents in knowing what is expected of their children and of themselves in terms of assisting with schoolwork.

In order for communication to lead to better performance, learners need positive feedback regarding their work and behaviour; therefore, schools and parents should

discuss what the best strategies are to use in addressing the work and behaviour of learners (Lemmer& Van Wyk, 2010:259-278). This can be done in the form of prize giving or organising scholarships for those good performing and behaving learners (Mchunu, 2012:35; Katanga, 2016:25). This will encourage learners to study harder.

According to Sambo (2016:50), teachers should send notes to parents informing them about their children's good progress and behaviour and the school should encourage parents to complement their children on good progress and behaviour. On the other side of the same token, learners who perform poorly should receive encouragement to study hard. In short, sharing of views between teachers and parents should include any decision that need to be implemented for the good performance of the school. According to Gwija (2016:40), the SGB should encourage parents at least to attend meetings with regard to their children's performance so that they can come up with some interventions such as extra classes and motivation. Therefore, the SGB should play a crucial role in emphasising the communication between the teachers concerning the progress of their children at home and school (Gwija, 2016:40).

#### **2.8.4 Support for principal and staff**

The SASA (1996:20) clearly stipulates that the SGB should support the school principal and his or her staff in order to improve school's performance. According to Kimu (2012:42), the most important support from parents to the school is creating an atmosphere in the school that is conducive for teaching and learning. The SGB needs to make sure that they perform their functions fully, especially in maintaining the discipline and making sure that the resources and property are well taken care of, for teaching and learning to take place in a conducive environment (Gwija, 2016:38). Kimu (2012:42) further maintains that every school has learning climates; some are effective and some are not. This means that schools with effective learning climates may have a higher achievement than those without; regardless of the type of community the school is serving (Gwija, 2016:38; Katanga, 2016:28).

Most rural schools are vulnerable to violence, riots and vandalism. School principal, teachers, fellow learners are mostly the victims of that situation (Kimu, 2012:190). Bonuke (2013:14) is of the opinion that violated schools hardly support effective teaching and learning and that situation can influence learner performance negatively,

which is why the SGB and parents should help prevent violence in schools. The role of parents in this regard is to advise learners (their own children) not to disorganise the teaching and learning climate of the school as that can affect their academic performance.

Witte and Sheridan (2011:3) point out that the SGB may, from time to time, organise seminars on conditions for good teaching and learning and the effect the disruption has in school programmes and on learner achievement. The seminars may be of good help because they may lead to dialogue between the school authorities, parents and learners. It can further enforce self-discipline and establish the culture of learning and teaching at the school and by doing so, learner achievement will be improved.

The involvement of parents in supporting the principal and staff, according to Witte and Sheridan (2011:3) and Gwija (2016:29), goes to a point where the SGB organises parents who have the relevant skills as volunteers to repair broken doors, windows, chairs, etc., identify the professional needs for teachers and organise programmes to address them (Sambo, 2016:25).

Redding and Walberg (2014:14) argue that in most rural areas, teachers may lack the latest teaching methodology and assessment skills or even computer skills. In partnership with the school management, the SGB and parents can organise staff development programmes to equip teachers with relevant skills and knowledge. Redding and Walberg (2014:14) add that the influence upon learner learning comes from different directions (from experience) and learning opportunities, not only in school but also from home, friendship networks and the wider community. Therefore, in short, the responsibility of learner achievement rests on all stakeholders— teachers, learners, parents and all community members in supporting the principal. Parents (SGB) may look for people with relevant knowledge and skills from the local community or even outside to train the staff and such proactive and supportive intervention the SGB and parents have, could enhance teaching and learning, as well as improve the academic performance of the Grade 12 learners (Kimu, 2012:36; Witte & Sheridan, 2011:3).

Where there are people, conflict is bound to take place. It is confirmed by Kimu (2012:68) that a school as an organisation is made up of different people from different

and diverse backgrounds and interests. Therefore, sometimes conflict may take place among the members of the school community. The SGB and parents need to intervene, because where there is no unity, effective teaching and learning can hardly take place. Kimu (2012:68) claims that the SGB and parents can maintain peace by trying to look into the complaints of teachers, learners and the principal in trying to resolve issues cordially. This means that when peace is maintained, teaching and learning will run smoothly and effectively (Chindanya, 2011:27).

Chindanya (2011:38) points out that by exchanging information, decision-making, sharing, helping at school, and partnering in children's learning, parents can become partners in the educational process. When parents and families are involved in their children's education, children improve as well. For the school to excel culturally, the SGB should identify parents who can train the choir, and teach learners traditional dances and games to enable them to compete with other schools (Hossain & Zeitlyn, 2010:5). In this way, learners may be empowered with skills and knowledge outside the classroom and assist the school community in forming a valuable and enduring identity. Hossain & Zeitlyn (2010:5) note that school performance goes beyond academic achievement and the support for extra-curricular programmes as they are equally important for the general improvement of the school.

### **2.8.5 Summary**

The progress and achievement of learners mostly depend on communication between the school and parents. The supervision that the family gives to the learners on the schoolwork may improve the academic performance, but it is very important that the school and the SGB train the parents on how to be fully involved in their children's education. Additionally, parental involvement plays a significant role in learners' results; hence, when parents are involved, they are able to assist and support the principal and the staff in instilling good behaviour in learners, lower absenteeism by doing follow-ups on learner whereabouts, and participating in school activities such as committees (sport, entertainment, etc.).

## **2.9 CONCLUSION**



There is a significant enhancement in the academic achievement of secondary school learners that parents play (Chindanya, 2011:12). Chindanya (2011:12) further argues that with the enhancement in school academic performance, decreases in delinquency and a more positive attitude towards school are the benefits of parental involvement in education.

Parental involvement in education has a significant effect on the quality of learners' experience of teaching and learning in the school and on their academic results and has consistently been associated with school success in a multitude of areas, such as better achievement and behaviour, lower absenteeism and a positive attitude towards school (Hayes, 2012:567-582). The learners' performance improves when the school reaches out to parents and communities. Furthermore, effective parental involvement gives a school a more positive image in the community as well as creates better relationships with the community (Hayes, 2012:567-582).

Furthermore, parents also play a huge role in financing and helping in raising funds and serving as volunteers. They also could develop a 'neighbourhood watch' committee for the schoolchildren who walk to and from school. Parents work on projects such as helping Grade 12 revision in high-impact subjects such as maths and science (Gwija, 2016:42). Parents also form some clubs like dad and moms' clubs for maintaining the physical environment of the school to create a suitable teaching and learning environment for the children (Hayes, 2012:567-582). Involvement of parents benefits the school by making the school provide a balanced curriculum that may improve the culture of teaching and learning. As a result, the acknowledgement of parents' role at school may result in the increase in learners' academic achievement. Hayes (2012:567-582, as cited by Gwija, 2016:42) provides some valuable insights into the potential forms of parental involvement with high school adolescents.

However, in this study, the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools is the main theme. Gwija (2016:43) maintains that the barriers affecting the learners' academic performance expressed are based on global academic perspective. A child that is developing undergoes social, cognitive and emotional dimensions. This means that parents' behaviour could influence learners' performance, meaning that parents' conduct at home could influence children's academic performance at school.

Since the assumption of the study is the importance of school governance and parental involvement for the improvement of Grade 12 academic performance, the demographic, cognitive and emotional barriers have a negative impact on parental involvement in their children's education. Some barriers are family organisation, income status, ethnic background and social class. However, the SGB should encourage parents to prepare a learning environment where home and school are suitable for a child's learning (Gwija, 2016:43).

In this chapter, the relevant literature on learner achievement, the composition of the SGB and its functions, the importance of involving parents and the role of the SGB in involving parents for better learner academic performance have been reviewed. The study of the literature revealed that SGB plays a huge role in enhancing parental involvement for the improvement of learner academic performance and that home or family, school environment is the main factor that determines the learner achievement. The next chapter, chapter3, documents the research methodology.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THE STUDY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 presented a literature review and theoretical framework related to the role of the School Governing Body (SGB) and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement. Therefore, the background to this study was established on the role of the SGB in schools, their composition and the significance of parental involvement. This detailed examination of the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement at rural schools has been described in full in Chapter 2, which is needed to understand where the study focus needs to be aimed at in the research methodology of this study.

This chapter discusses the research paradigm, research approach, research design approach, research problem and objectives with the research applied in this research study. This is done to get appropriate data that would answer questions on how effective school governance and parental involvement are in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at rural schools in Mpumalanga, with contributions that the SGB and parents make towards in the poor academic performance of Grade 12, how effective the SGB is and what strategies the SGB and parents can employ to improve Grade 12 results in the Mkhuhlu circuit, Mpumalanga.

The chapter also presents a logical process of identifying the qualitative sampling technique, population selection, and instrumentation and data procedures. In addition, data analysis, processing and presentation will be examined.

The study is located within a qualitative interpretative research paradigm. Therefore, this chapter will also include the rationale of the researcher in choosing the qualitative research. This chapter further discusses the measures of trustworthy, credibility and ethical considerations of the study.

#### **3.2 RATIONALE FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

According to Tekete (2012:49) empirical research is described as any information gained by experience, observation or experimental. This kind of research can be quantitative or qualitative (Tekete, 2014:49). The researcher's main aim was to establish and investigate the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools of Mpumalanga. Data were then created as the study investigated how school governance and parental involvement raise academic achievement of Grade 12. The data collected using observation and experience differs from the information gained through the literature review. Therefore, the data collection methods and data were amplified by experiences of the researcher.

### **3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN APPROACH**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

Empirical research is the research that is guided by evidence. When this research is conducted, there are two types of research designs that may be used, namely qualitative and quantitative (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015:3). However, quantitative research is useful for identifying relationships between variables, explaining reasons or causes of changes in measured social facts. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the issue from the perspective of the participants of a situation. This means that qualitative research can illuminate why the relationship and connection exists by going directly to the source, which is people themselves. The researcher in qualitative research detaches from the study for prejudice to be avoided at all costs, while in quantitative research, the researcher becomes immersed in the circumstances being studied (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015:10). This study was conducted using the qualitative research approach. The effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools of Mpumalanga is understood and investigated by using the personal and professional view and participants' perspective.

Tekete (2012:50) and Gwija (2016:52) argue that the research design refers to the complete strategy or plan that the researcher uses in the investigation to obtain evidence to answer research questions (Tekete, 2012:50; Gwija, 2016:52). The research design is the plan or design which will be followed to find answers on the

central research problem as it describes all the procedures followed when conducting the study, such as, when, from whom and under what circumstances or conditions the data were collected. In short, Gwija (2016:52) highlights that research design as a plan helps the researcher to know how to select the subjects, to set up research sites and data collection procedures to answer research questions put forward in chapter one. This helps in providing the valid, accurate results possible for the study's aims (Tekete, 2012:50). Gwija (2016:52) further explains that the research design should be a plan that is flexible to be followed by the researcher, as it serves as a guide on how to select the site and collect data, as these are research procedures.

### **3.3.2 Research paradigm**

The study was conducted in the constructivist paradigm. Linchman (2014:14) maintains that constructivism is a philosophical viewpoint where people construct and interpret the phenomenon using their experiences in relating the knowledge of what they know in order to understand the reality of the phenomenon (Silverman, 2013:101). Therefore, the constructivist paradigm is mostly concerned with interpreting meaningful human and social action while emphasising that theorising should be understood by the human actors themselves, the task of the researcher is therefore, to understand what is going on, as it emphasises the process of understanding.

However, this study is located within a constructive paradigm that consider the experiences of individual as the main source for interpreting the reality of the phenomenon (Wahyuni, 2012:71). This means that within the constructive paradigm the researcher tries by all means to make sense of the world of the participants by talking to them. This will allow the researcher to interpret the participants' thoughts, opinions and experiences in their own cultural and setting context (Katanga, 2016:36). When using the constructive paradigm, the researcher is able to describe data in order to allow the reader to create a clear picture of the circumstance of the study. However, the advantage of using the constructive paradigm is that it helps the researcher to understand, draw coherent and logical conclusions that participants differ and they may distinguish the same social phenomenon differently (Katanga, 2016:36).

In this study, the researcher understands that in this world, most existing realities are presented and interpreted in different views and she understands the participants' knowledge regarding the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools of Mpumalanga. Therefore, the choice of the research paradigm was informed by the aims of this study, as the new knowledge is to be constructed by using data obtained from interviews, on what exactly the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools of Mpumalanga.

### **3.3.3 Qualitative research approach**

Qualitative research approach is the approach used in this study. According to Katanga (2016:36) and Crossman (2018:1), qualitative research is the type of scientific research that seeks to understand a research topic or problem from the perspectives of the population that the problem involves. It is an effective approach in terms of obtaining socially and culturally specific information about the values, behaviours and opinions of particular populations. Particularly, qualitative research approach's strengths are that it is able to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience the particular research problem. It therefore, seeks to answer the problem in question as it systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the research question. It also collects evidence and produces findings that were not determined. This is the reason why this study considered the qualitative approach as suitable for the study as its main aim was to investigate the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools of Mpumalanga. Therefore, the qualitative was appropriately used in this study.

According to Katanga (2016:37), qualitative research approach focuses on the meanings attached to particular viewpoints and since people differ in their views and they may have many different meanings in the same phenomenon. A phenomenon, according to Van de Ven (2016:245-264), can be any problem, topic or issue that is chosen by a researcher as the subject of investigation. The phenomenon can originate from a theoretical discipline, a personal experience or insight or may even originate in the practical world of affairs. A phenomenon may be perceived to represent an

unsatisfying circumstance, a promising opportunity or simply a topic of interest. In this study, the phenomenon is the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools of Mpumalanga. The qualitative approach used in this study helped the researcher and will help the reader of the study to have an understanding of the world, their society and instructions far better (Katanga, 2016:36). In view of the above, the researcher investigated the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools of Mpumalanga. Therefore, the perspective of the participants, which are the principal, teacher, SGB, learners and parents were considered in illuminating why the relationship and connection exists between the SGB, parental involvement and Grade 12 academic performance by going to the source which are the principal, teacher, SGB, learners and parents. Qualitative research approach is interactive, rich and holistic as it focuses on real-life and lived experiences in a specific environment and it shows the researcher how reports and policies constitute reality and even questions that we have.

The qualitative approach is interactive in the sense that Katanga (2016:37) argues that it insights into what people believe and feel about the way they are. It involves their spoken words during interviews, as evidence that the researcher later uses when analysing data. This means that by interviewing the participants or respondents, the main question of the study, which is to investigate the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools of Mpumalanga will be vocal (human voice), there will be no contamination with any slanting from the researcher (Katanga, 2016:36).

In addition, since the data collected in a qualitative approach are in the form of words, these words are usually transcribed from the questions where participants' experiences and viewpoints regarding particular issues, circumstances or events are recorded. These words are normally combined with documents or any visual resources, which may include letters, reports, minutes of meetings, policy documents, correspondence, memos, oral history and so on from people's actions so that the phenomenon studied is understood more clearly. The researcher in this study used policies of the SGB and the school. Minutes of meetings were also a rich source of

data, as well as correspondence between SGB, principal and parents as a collective (Crossman, 2018:3)

The case study method was used in this study. Creswell (2013:97) and Zainai (2007:2) define a case study as a method that enables a researcher to explore and closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, a case study excels at bringing researchers to an understanding of complex issues and can either extend experience or add strengths to the known through previous studies. Therefore, a detailed contextual analysis for a limited number of events and their relationships is emphasised by case studies. In short, the case study method selects a small geographical area or few individuals as the subjects of study, as they are aimed at exploring and investigating contemporary real-life phenomenon within its context. However, in cases where boundaries between phenomenon and context are unclear, multiple sources of evidence can be used (Zainai, 2007:2).

In view of the above, the use of multiple site sources of data can enable the researcher to evaluate a variety of experience from different sites by interviewing different participants to acquire at least a more holistic idea or picture of the issue being studied or researched (Katanga, 2016:42). In this study, the researcher's focus was on the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools of Mpumalanga. The focus was on the principal, teacher, SGB, Grade 12 learners and parents in the school. The mentioned individuals had similar experiences, namely that they hold the same position at each school visited. The main aim for the focus is to understand the phenomenon at each school chosen (Katanga, 2016:42).

### **3.3.4 Rationale for choosing qualitative approach**

The qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study, as the intention of the researcher was to understand and gain an insight into the experience of the SGB in enhancing the parental involvement in secondary schools for the improvement of academic results of Grade 12 learners. The qualitative approach not only enabled the researcher to explore the experiences of the SGB, but also to understand their role in enhancing parental involvement within the rural secondary school context. Therefore, as the qualitative approach is naturalistic because it tries to understand the



phenomenon from the viewpoints of the participants, this approach facilitated the conversation between the researcher and the participants during the interviews and the researcher's aim was to get a vivid picture of what exactly was happening in the study area.

The researcher arranged the participants in a natural setting, which at least made them comfortable to share their thoughts, views and experiences with regard to the topic. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:141) claim that qualitative research deals with observation (fieldwork), discovery, describing, comparing and analysing characteristics of a particular unit. Therefore, in this study, the researcher interacted with the principal, teachers, SGB, Grade 12 learners and parents to explore the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners.

### **3.3.5 Research problem**

The main research problem formulated and stated in Chapter 1 is phrased as the following research question:

How could the SGB and parents work adequately together to raise Grade 12 academic achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools?

The following four sub-questions, which were derived from the main research problem and directed the empirical research of this study, are:

- What are the contributions of the SGB and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?
- What are the characteristics of an effective school governing body?
- Which strategies by the SGB and parents will be required to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?

### **3.3.6 Objectives with the research**

The key objective of this study is to establish the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools.

The main objective for the study can be divided into the following:

- To explain the contributions of the SGB and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools;
- To examine the characteristics of an effective school governing body.
- To investigate the strategies that can be implemented by the SGB and parents to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools.

In addition to the above-mentioned aims, the researcher will undertake to add to the existing body of literature concerning the role of the SGB in parental involvement. What additional responsibilities do the SGB need to undertake in its role as the representatives of the parents in encouraging and enhancing parental involvement in secondary schools? The researcher would like to provide a comparison between the roles of SGB now and compare it to the role of SGB with parents involved in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement.

### **3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

#### **3.4.1 Sampling technique**

Sampling refers to the statistical process of selecting and studying the qualities of a relatively small number of items from a large population of those items so to draw statistically valid conclusions about the characteristics of the entire population. Since this study used case study as a research method, the purposeful sampling technique was then used. Palinkas (2016:533-544) explains that purposeful sampling is a strategy whereby a small group of individuals are likely to be knowledgeable and have insight and is information-rich about the phenomenon being investigated. In short, purposeful sampling is widely used in qualitative research.

#### **3.4.2 Population and sampling for the study**

The target population for this study were the principals, teachers, SGB members, Grade 12 learners and parents in all three selected schools. This population group was considered appropriate for the study because it constituted the key role players

responsible for the daily routine of teaching and learning in schools. Therefore, they were in the best position to supply the researcher with the information needed to give answers to study's research question.

Sampling, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:111), refers to the statistical process of selecting and studying the characteristics of a relatively small number of items from a relatively large population of such items, to draw statistically valid inferences about the characteristics of the entire population. Purposeful sampling was used for this study as it is recommended for studies focusing on few cases (Gay *et al.*, 2012:142). Three schools were a sample from a population of 10 public secondary schools in Mkhuhlu circuit of Mpumalanga. From each school, one school principal, one teacher, one SGB member, three Grade 12 learners and three parents were selected and that gave a total of 27 participants.

The first school's performance is very poor; the second one has at least average performance and the third one performs very well. Hence, the performance of the school is dependent on the positive relationship between the principal, teachers, SGB, learners and parents. Therefore, they all account for the academic performance of the Grade 12 learners. For instance, the principal needs to make sure that there is effective teaching and learning at the school and that he or she is the professional leader of the school. Teachers are the ones that are directly involved in the teaching of learners. The SGB governs the school (decision-making, appointment of teachers, discipline, etc.), while parents are the primary teachers of the learners and learners are the ones who are the receivers of education. That is the only reason that made the researcher to select the five most important persons of the school, namely, the principal, teacher, SGB, Grade 12 learners and parents. The schools were chosen because they have functional governing bodies and were able to provide information on the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 achievement.

### **3.4.3 Informed consent**

According to Palmer (2015:62), informed consent is an ethical and legal necessity for the researcher to involve human participants. This process is important because all participants are informed about everything that the study is about. This process helps

the participant to decide after studying all the aspects of the study and confirms his or her voluntary and willingness to participate in the study. Therefore, informed consent's goal is to provide sufficient information to potential participants such as usage of the language that the participants understand so to make them feel comfortable to participate voluntarily and with full understanding (Palmer, 2015:62).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:118), in areas that are administered by certain authorities, the researcher needs to get the necessary permission from those authorities before conducting the study. Therefore, for this study, the researcher applied for permission from the Mpumalanga Department of Education, Mkhuhlu circuit, schools' principals, teachers, learners and parents to conduct the study at the three selected secondary schools in Mkhuhlu circuit.

The main purpose, aim and objective of this study were to find out what is the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement in the Mpumalanga rural schools. In order to gather information from the participants, a written permission needs to be acquired from the participants in the form of an informed consent (Palmer, 2015:62).

The researcher in this study sent letters to the schools' principals (Appendix C), teachers, parents, learners (Appendix D) and underage learners (Appendix E) of the three participating schools. These letters required written permission from the above participants for a researcher to come to their schools and interview them, as well as gaining access to any documentation concerning the governance of their schools in terms of parental involvement. The letter was also sent to the SGB members (Appendix D) asking their permission for the researcher to interview them on their role, as well as how they involve parents in the school. In the letters that the researcher sent to the participants, participants were informed about everything that the study was about. They were also given free choice of participation as required during all qualitative research studies, participants' participation was voluntarily and they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

Another letter was sent to the Mpumalanga Department of Education (Appendix B) and Mkhuhlu circuit (Appendix D). This letter outlined all the intentions of the study and it highlighted that the study area was three schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit. In those

letters, it was also mentioned that all three schools were given letters stating the intention of the study as well as that confidentiality will be kept at maximum, meaning that all these schools and participants will be kept anonymous or coded.

After the responses from the participants to letters that the researcher sent, confirming that they were willing to participate in the study, the researcher issued the consent letters to the participants. The content of those consent letters includes the following information (Appendix D):

- Introduction and background of the study
- Aim of the study
- Benefits of the study for the participating schools and the schools in general
- The plan, procedure and scope of the study
- The roles of both the researcher and the participants in the study

The researcher then asked the participants to confirm that they were willing to participate in the study by signing the informed consent letters and returned them to the researcher. All the signed informed consent letters were copied and each participant received a copy as the evidence that they had participated in the study.

#### **3.4.4 Anonymity and confidentiality**

Katanga (2016:48) highlights that participants are entitled to confidentiality. He further state that researchers should ensure that data collected through participants, participants are protected. This means that confidential information provided by research participants must be held confidential by researchers. Even when information enjoys no legal protection or privilege, no legal force should be applied (Katanga, 2016:48).

In this study, the researcher ensured that the participants were not identified in anyway by any person who will read the study. Therefore, data collected from the three schools and all participants were handled in a very confidential manner. This is the reason these three schools were not mentioned by their real names but School A, School B and School C to protect the identity of these schools and their staff members. Only the researcher was aware of the identity of the participants and the schools. Even when

transcribing interviews, the researcher used pseudonyms while coding during the presentation of findings.

As mentioned earlier, letters explaining the intention and the purpose of the study were sent to the three selected schools' principals, teachers, SGB members, Grade 12 learners and parents. Other letters were sent to the Mpumalanga Department of Education and Mkhuhlu circuit. These letters outlined the intentions of the study and that the three schools were involved. Nevertheless, importantly, before the collection of data, the researcher needed to apply for a clearance with University of South Africa (UNISA) from the Unisa Ethics Committee (REC). It is essential for all researches to have ethical clearance before data collection. The importance of this process is to ensure that sound methodology and scientific validity take place. This is to avoid conducting research with flaws, as it is a waste of energy, time, money and resources.

#### **3.4.5 Ethical measures and considerations**

Fouka and Mantzorou (2011:4) and Katanga (2016:46) advocate the idea that human rights are claims and it is a must that are to be met by the researchers in order to maintain the respect they deserve and in ensuring that the participants are treated with dignity at all times. The participants' rights and principles need to be respected when conducting research, as they are beneficial.

In this study, in order to ensure that the learners and adult participants were not emotionally or psychologically hurt, the researcher made sure that those participants were provided with clear, detailed and factual information about the study, its methods, its risks and benefits, along with assurances of the voluntary nature of the participation and the freedom to refuse or withdraw without any penalties or consequences. In order to ensure that the risk or benefit ratio is favourable to the participants, the researcher ensured that the alphanumeric assignments for each participant are kept strictly confidential. This means that only the researcher knew which participant was assigned a particular alphanumeric code.

Since the interviews took place at school after school hours, various questions arose, such as:

- What about participants who knew each other; were they comfortable to speak?

- What were the implications of this kind of a risk?
- And what if the learner participant said something very critical about what was happening in the school or at home?
- How did the researcher deal with this from an ethical perspective?

Below, possible ways that were used to minimise and to handle the above-mentioned possible situations are outlined.

The researcher made sure that participants' responses were kept confidential and this promise was communicated to the participants at the beginning of the research. This was to protect the privacy of the participants and to avoid victimisation of participants, mostly, learners by the principal, teachers, SGB and parents especially if their comments were critical of these authority structures. This served to protect their self-esteem and their levels of confidence. All the necessary precautionary measures, such as taking into account ethical considerations such as avoidance of harm to the participants, gaining the informed consent of the participants and respecting the confidentiality of the participants were taken into consideration to ensure that all the participants have individually and voluntarily decided for themselves the extent to which their beliefs, attitudes and behaviours would be exposed.

The ethical rule of social research, which was that it should bring no harm to participants, was very fundamental. The rights and dignity of the participants were respected by clarifying that their participation was voluntary and that they could refuse or withdraw from taking part at any time. All participants were assured of complete confidentiality with their names remaining anonymous. The researcher's ethical obligation was to accept to protect participants within all possible reasonable limits from any form of physical discomfort that could have emerged from the research project. Before the start of the interviews, participants were thoroughly informed about the potential impact of the investigation. Such information merely offered the participants the opportunity to withdraw from the investigation if they felt so (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:118). In this study, participants were informed about the nature of the research and they were at liberty to withdraw from the study, if they wished to due to personal reasons.

In this study, the researcher made use of informed consent. Gay *et al.* (2014:23) point out that informed consent denotes that the participants should be given all the necessary details in connection with the study so that they can make an informed decision relating to their voluntary participation in the study. As Creswell (2014:147) further highlights, these details should include the purpose of the study, what the participants would be required to do if they decide to participate in the study, the advantages and possible disadvantages of participating in the study as well as their right to withdraw at any stage without any judgements (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:78). In this study, participants were apprised on the informed consent arrangement since the purpose of the study revolved around the school governance and parental involvement in the learners' education.

Issues related to anonymity, confidentiality and privacy together with how the data were to be used when the research process has been concluded are of importance (Gay *et al.*, 2014:22). Since this study explored the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools, the researcher made sure that the informed consent and assent of all the participants were received. This was accomplished by telephoning all the participants once the letters of invitation to participate in the study were initially given to them. Those acceptance forms were then returned to the researcher and the researcher confirmed the receipt to the participants. The signed consent forms were strictly confidential and were treated with the utmost discretion.

Since this study also involved interviews with learners who are legal minors, a letter of consent was sent to their parents and legal guardians. This letter stressed that:

- learners' participation in this study was purely voluntary;
- learners were free to refuse to answer any question at any time;
- learners could withdraw from the research at any time;
- the responses of learners to any questions were to be kept strictly confidential;
- the names of learner or any identifying description would not be divulged in the report; and



- learners were free to consult with the school counsellor or a peer counsellor, if needed.

Furthermore, the researcher affirmed that the learner's identity would be protected to the extent that, in any publication emerging from this research, the learner would be referred to by the use of an alphanumeric pseudonym (e.g. L1, L2, L3, etc.)

### **3.5 INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

#### **3.5.1 In-depth interviews**

Because this study aimed at investigating the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools, in-depth interviews were useful. This is because the study wanted detailed information about the participant's thoughts and behaviour or exploring new issues in depth.

According to Boyce and Neale (2006:3), an in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique where intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents are conducted in order to explore their viewpoints on a particular phenomenon. Boyce and Naele (2006:3) further state that in-depth interviews have an advantage of providing much more detailed information than the data that are collected through methods such as surveys. In-depth interviews are also perfect in creating a more relaxed atmosphere in which information is collected and makes participants feel more comfortable in conversing with the researcher about the issues at hand.

According to Boyce and Neale (2006:3), in-depth interviews are advantageous because a researcher is able to gain detailed information about the participants' thoughts and behaviours about the topic or phenomenon. When in-depth interviews are conducted, detailed information can be obtained if one wants to explore issues in-depth. These kinds of interviews often provide context to other data and pictures of what happened in the study area that are more complete may be created. The in-depth interviews are mostly used in places of focus groups especially if participants are not comfortable in talking openly in the group, or when the researcher wants to distinguish between individuals' opinions about the phenomenon. Therefore, an in-depth interview suits the above situation better. In-depth interviews are often also used to refine questions for future research of a particular group.

In-depth interviews were suitable for this study as it aims at collecting in-depth information from the participants using semi-structured questions. The use of the in-depth interviews assisted the researcher to interact with the principals, teachers, SGB members, Grade 12 learners and parents effectively. The researcher in this study asked participants' unrestricted questions based on the role of SGB and parental involvement in secondary schools for better academic performance in Grade 12. In these interviews, participants were then able to respond in their own words. All participants in this study gave descriptive information, which contributed a lot in answering the research questions and their responses to probed questions were elaborated and fully explained for a better understanding.

Booyse *et al.* (2011:3) argue that interviews are referred to as conversations between the researcher and the person being interviewed, who is referred to as an interviewee. In this study, the person that will be interviewed will be referred to as participant. In the interviews, it is vital to consider rules and ethical considerations that govern the way in which the interview takes place. During the interview, the researcher records the conversation with a promise of confidentiality. Therefore, confidentiality and anonymity are important during interviews.

The careful use of language should also be considered, for instance, the use of jargon and making sure that questions are clear or paraphrased if need be. Hence, the researcher in this study used in-depth interviews, but questions were used, meaning that there were questions that were drawn prior to the interview. Member checks and participants' validation were used to create a more accurate account of what happened during the interviews. This is because the researcher was very aware that answers given to the questions asked could be influenced by the dynamics that might have been created between the researchers and the participants.

It is important as a researcher to build a trusting relationship between him or her and the participants (Katanga, 2016:43). Therefore, in this study, not only good questions were asked during the interviews; the researcher was also mindful of establishing a logically feasible location for the interviews as interviews took place in the participants' places. In addition, the researcher made sure that the atmosphere was comfortable for him or her to engage in an honest, open and honest fun dialogue.

It is outlined by Roller and Lavrakas (2015:32) that, for a researcher to minimise unintentional variations in the data associated with the business of the researcher, the following skills should be considered. These will actually maximise the validity and reliability of the data. In this study, the researcher considered these skills, namely:

- Rapport was built with the participants
- Listen actively to the participants and showing interest in their answers
- Focus on the research objectives but allow flexibility
- Be considerate of verbal and non-verbal cues that add meaning to the data collected
- Ensure accuracy and completeness of data during interviews

### **3.5.2 Document retrieval**

Besides interviews, various sources such as text and documents, both published and unpublished sources were used to collect data. These documents are rich sources of data, of which may include letters, reports, minutes of meetings, policy documents, correspondence, memos, oral history and so on from people's actions so that the phenomenon studied is understood more clearly (Triad, 2016:2).

Triad (2016:2) and Alshenqeeti (2014:39-45) define collection as the process of compiling and accumulating objects that are closely related to the study. The collection mostly takes place when the researcher is in the field, collecting data and from other sources like libraries and electronically based sources.

The collected documents can include the participants' produced items, which would then complement the information gained from interviews with participants. Most documents that this study used were related to the main question of the study, namely:

How could the SGB and parents work adequately together to raise Grade 12 academic achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools?

Those documents included minutes of meetings, correspondence between SGB, parents, teachers and principal as they work collaboratively in improving Grade 12 academic achievements. The documents that the researcher used helped the

researcher to understand the role of the school governance and parental involvement and the strategies that SGB and parents should employ to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

Face-to-face interviews were used in this study. According to Roller & Lavrakas (2015:58), face-to-face interviews are mostly used to solicit information in researches that are very sensitive, such as sexual behaviour. It is therefore advantageous because the interviewer is present, which makes it easier for a participant to clarify answers and ask for clarity in asked questions. During the interviews, the researcher was able to hear and record the interviews using a recording device (digital voice recorder). Notes were also taken during interviews. The researcher followed all research procedures, such as explaining to the participants the aim of the study, emphasising the confidentiality of the research. How the study's results will be stored was fully explained to the participants, and participants were given time to sign the consent forms. While the above was taking place, the whole process was recorded. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that participants understood everything the researcher needed and more clarity was provided to the participants.

According to Alshenqeeti (2014:39-45) when the interviewer conducts interviews, he/she should consider the following:

- Knowledge about the study site. In this study, this was highly considered that the study area is rural, that respect is still a very important aspect and teachers are respected by the community.
- Listening to the participants, not cutting them off with the aim of wanting them to move quickly. Hence, in this study, adults were the main participants; the researcher made sure that participants were listened to without interrupting them. This gave the participants a sense of respect from the researcher. The participants were also at ease and the researcher got as much information as possible.

- Not to make judgements about the site. In this study, the researcher made sure that conclusions are not made about the academic results of those schools based on the area being rural.
- Pay attention to the participants' emotions. As some of the questions were sensitive to principals, teachers, SGB and learners, the researcher ensured that after asking the question, the emotions of the participants were read quickly and paraphrasing or clarification was given, where possible.
- Probe and lead the interviews to make sure that the participant's responses answer the research questions at the end. In this study, parents and SGB members would have wanted to over-explain sometimes; therefore, the researcher led questions and interviews to ensure that the responses given answered the main question of the study.
- Most importantly, the researcher should stay calm, accepting and neutral, especially when using his or her facial expressions, body language or any non-verbal communications. This was very important in this study. People who work together at all times were interviewed; that is, principal, teachers, SGB, Grade 12 learners and parents; therefore, being as neutral as possible was crucial so that after interviews, those participants still relate.

Therefore, these interviews provided the direct evidence of the involvement, contribution and cooperation of the main stakeholders, that is, principals, teachers, SGB, Grade 12 learners and parents in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION**

#### **3.7.1 Data analysis and coding**

In order for the researcher to get the most from data analysis stage, systematic and organised data should be prepared. Data analysis, according to Gay *et al.* (2012:465), is defined as the process where collected data are ordered, structured and given meaning. In a qualitative study, there is a close relationship between data collection and data analysis, involving the assembly, ordering, classifying, printing and reformatting, if needed, of data. The researcher has many choices how he or she

organise his or her data; that is, computer files where the computer is used to analyse data, as it is very easy to access to files because they are served; and the manual way where the researcher would print out all the data into hard copies, label and file them clearly.

To complete the data analysis, certain steps were completed. Data collected were analysed by means of patterns and themes. In this study, the researcher made use of content analysis. Content analysis “is the categorizing and identifying of patterns and themes” (Theron, 2014:4). The processes of searching for patterns and themes will be distinguished as pattern analysis and theme analysis, respectively (Creswell, 2014:343; Theron, 2014:4). This process was suitable for this study, because the structured interviews and document analysis yielded a vast number of notes. This process of content analysis helped the researcher to organise all the notes and themes from the data collected.

The analysis of qualitative data requires an accurate description of the responses of the participants. Pattern refers to findings that are descriptive by nature, while themes refer to a categorical form that interprets the meaning of the pattern (Creswell, 2014:343). Creswell (2014:343) argues that, through content analysis, one can gather meaningful findings. Content analysis makes sense of multiple interview transcripts and pages of field notes to identify major patterns of outcomes from separate cases (Cohen *et al.*, 2011:563). Therefore, in the study, the researcher sorted responses of interviews into broad patterns. These patterns were then divided into themes. The categories of patterns were further divided into sub-patterns and points of comparison were extracted to draw conclusions on how involved parents are in the education of their children. This came from the data of the responses of participants and document analysis. The researcher made sure that the reliability of coding patterns was assessed by checking for contingency between different coding points.

The researcher informed the principal and the SGB prior to the interviews that evidence of communication methods such as minutes of the SGB meetings, parents meetings, code of conduct was needed for scrutiny. The reasons for this were to check how often do parents and the school meet and what it is that they normally discuss. This helped in determining whether at these meetings, learner academic performance is part of their discussions or not.

Collected documents were therefore analysed. Cohen *et al.* (2011:253) argue that document analysis is a form of analysis that is normally used in a qualitative research where documents are interpreted by the researcher in order to give a meaning around the phenomenon in discussion. It is an important tool on its own right as it is used as a secondary data for a triangulation. Triangulation, according to Triad (2016:2), is the use of at least two sources of which is primary and secondary method. This can provide a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility as document is manageable and practical resources. This therefore, means that corroborating data collected through different methods can reduce the impact of potential bias (Triad, 2016:2). However, before the researcher uses a document analysis, the researcher should first get an idea of how useful are the documents collected in the site before taking a decision of whether documents will support the interviews (Bowen, 2009:27-40).

The narrative passage from the interviews was also used to convey the findings of the analysis. The table that conveyed descriptive information about each participant was created. Finally, the researcher formed an understanding of the data. Therefore, the researcher in this study interpreted data to make meaning of experiences, views, knowledge and ideas of principals, teachers, SGBs, Grade 12 learners and parents from the three selected secondary schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit in the Mpumalanga province.

### **3.7.2 Data presentation**

The research procedures in terms of data collection have been discussed above. After the transcription of data from interviews, all transcribed data were filed. The interviews in this study provided the evidence that was needed to answer the research question. This means that final record included the following:

- The precise verbatim accounts of interviews
- Elaborations of interviews
- Insight and comments to support the meaning of the research
- The self-reflection of the role of the researcher in the study
- Reflection of the researcher on the reaction of participants

As mentioned earlier, the researcher manually managed the data. Furthermore, a computer was used to assist the researcher in order to establish a system to organise data and to make it easy for retrieval. Selection, comparison, synthesis and interpretation of data were done in a systematic process. This helped the researcher to understand the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools.

Hence, the research was qualitative; a narrative passage was used to convey findings of the analysis. The researcher then extracted the meaning of the data. The meaning was also derived from the study by doing comparison between the information found in literature and theories. New questions were derived from data collected that were added in the data findings and discussed in the data presentation.

### **3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

#### **3.8.1 Credibility of the study**

Katanga (2016:46) states that the study should ensure credibility of the research findings. This means that the researcher should make sure research activities make findings that are believable, convincing and confirmable. In line with Maswanganyi (2010:12), to ensure credibility, the researcher should reflect on his or her actions during the interviews and as the key participant in the research process should establish how he or she contributes based on the experiences and opinions he or she has because they are influential in the research process. Hence, qualitative research demands the use of various approaches with the aim of increasing credibility of the research findings and that data from the participants are triangulated, thorough checking is necessary. Triangulation is also known as crystallisation. As discussed earlier, Katanga (2016:46) describes it as a means of using at least more than one method to collect data on the same topic or phenomenon. Therefore, this is the way of assuring the credibility of the study or research.

In this study, to ensure credibility, the researcher used semi-structured interviews and document analysis as data sources to justify and sustentative the evidence. The researcher further requested the participants to go through the transcripts to ensure accuracy. Member checking was conducted at last to decrease the incidence of



incorrect data capturing and interpretation for the authentic or original findings. (Katanga, 2016:47) confirms that conducting the member checking is very important because it allows the researcher an opportunity to verify that accuracy and completeness of the findings to improve credibility in the study. The researcher made sure that the whole procedure was documented for cases of request to disclose in the public.

In short, crystallisation and member checks were used in the study to validate results by using multiple methods of data collection and analysis as well as returning transcribed and verbatim data to the participants for verification to ensure accuracy.

### **3.8.2 Dependability**

For this study to be dependable, the researcher employed interviews and document analysis as overlapping method to enhance dependability. Dependability, according to Anney (2014:278), refers to “the stability of findings over time”. It involves the process of participants evaluating all the findings and the interpretation of study; therefore, to make sure that all participants are supported by the data received from the study. It therefore, enables the readers of the research to develop understanding of all methods that the researcher used and their effectiveness.

Researchers should document research design and implementation, including the methodology and methods, the details of data collection (e.g. field notes, memos, the researcher’s reflexivity journal and reflective appraisal of the project) (Brewer 2016:3).

Tufford & Newman (2010: 80-96) state that bracketing is a fundamental aspect of phenomenological enquiry that enables researchers to examine their own preconceptions; by setting their prejudices aside, they become more open to acquiring new knowledge and new conceptual possibilities. In this study, flexibility and bracketing was considered fully, as the researcher was collecting data in order to understand the participants’ views without manipulating those views. Therefore, evaluation of oneself was done in order to be able to bracket and put aside all possible personal experiences, biases and preconceived notions about the study. This was done to avoid potential distortion and twisting of data and findings.

Further, bracketing assists in entering into spaces of profound reflection, enhances the acuity of the research, analysis and results (Tufford & Newman, 2010:80-96), and stretches “beyond the constraints of egocentrism and ethnocentrism to facilitate innovation and renewed insights” (Tufford & Newman, 2010:80-96). Therefore, in this study, the researcher was guided by the data and not by my personal opinions and perceptions on the research topic. The researcher was impartial and professional when dealing with participants’ views and opinions. Before the start of the interviews, participants were told that there were no wrong answers and that the research was about what they thought or felt about the question, or subject at hand. Furthermore, the researcher used participants’ own words in data analysis and member checks were conducted to see whether participants’ responses were correctly interpreted.

It is very important to note that the researcher has to ensure that the research findings are consistent and could be repeated. Therefore, the standards and procedures in the study should be reported in detail to enable external researcher to repeat the inquiry and get some results. This shows the effectiveness of the methods.

### **3.9 CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the research approach, research design, and methodology used in detail. Data collection and data analysis, credibility and trustworthiness and ethical considerations were fully discussed.

The chapter that follows (Chapter 4) gives the biographical information of the participants. Findings from interviews with participants (principal, teachers SGB, Grade 12 learners and parents) as well as document analysis will be interpreted.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, data that were collected during the face-to-face interviews with the principals, teachers, SGB members, Grade 12 learners and their parents, as well as the document analysis are presented. From Chapter 2, it is noted that inefficient school governance and poor parental involvement affect the Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools. It is believed that not all parents are fully involved in the decisions that affect their children directly and indirectly. If a school rarely communicates with parents, it has a negative effect on the day-to-day interaction with them. This is the only reason why the SASA promotes schools to work in collaboration with parents to enhance and raise the academic achievement of their children (cf. 2.6.3).

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effect of school governance and parental involvement in increasing Grade 12 academic achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools. The questions asked in the study were intended to clarify how the SGB and parents contribute towards the poor academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools. The questions also had to provide the characteristics of an effective school governing body, as well as which strategies will be required by the SGB and parents to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools. Furthermore, it had to indicate how these strategies of the SGB and parents can support change in enhancing academic performance of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools (cf. 1.5). Therefore, the analysis of this study is related to the following themes:

*Table 4.1 Summary of themes and sub-themes derived from data*

Themes	Sub-themes
Theme 1 Effective communication	Sub-theme 1: Face-to-face meetings Sub-theme 2: Messages via learners Sub-theme 3: Letters Sub-theme 4: Progress reports Sub-theme 5: Telephones Sub-theme 6: General parents' meetings

Theme 2 Raise academic achievement of Grade 12	Sub-theme 1: Extra classes and school camps Sub-theme 2: Motivation Sub-theme 3: Completion of homework and giving learners time to study
Theme 3: The role of the SGB	Sub-theme 1: Code of conduct Sub-theme 2: Maintaining discipline Sub-theme 3: Supporting the day-to-day smooth running of the school
Theme 4 Contributory factors towards drop in academic achievement of Grade 12	Sub-theme 1: Absenteeism Sub-theme 2: Illiteracy of parents

Each of the above-mentioned themes is discussed under the positive relationship between the principal, teachers, SGB and parents. These themes include characteristics of an effective SGB and the importance of parental involvement. Hence, data were obtained by using qualitative data collection methods such as a global and local literature review, reading school documents, site observations and face-to-face interviews. The above-mentioned themes emanated from document analysis, site observation and interviews with principals, teachers, SGB members, Grade 12 learners and their parents (cf. 3.4.2, 3.5.1 & 3.5.2). Inverted commas were used mainly to indicate direct responses or words of participants and to show that those discussions were not altered (cf. 3.5.1). The statements from participants were quoted as primary sources of information (cf. 3.5.1). In other words, quotations ensured that the experience that the researcher had did not compromise the credibility of findings (cf. 3.5.1).

As mentioned earlier, qualitative data methods were used to analyse intensive data that were collected from participants on their willingness in their natural setting (cf. 3.7.1). Conversation analysis, qualitative analysis and content analysis procedures were used in this study (cf. 3.7.1). Concurrently, data credibility and member checking were used as the main qualitative data analysis procedures (cf. 3.3.1). Data generalisation or transferability, as previously discussed in Chapter 3, was dealt with comprehensively (cf. 3.3.1).

Data presentation started on the research's preparations for gaining access into the research study area and during her visits while preparing to get participants at each site or school. The comprehensive data collection procedures, findings, content analysis and conversation analysis were detailed. Document analysis and face-to-face interviews were used to collect empirical data (cf. 3.5.2, 3.6 & 3.7.1). The researcher's analytically triangulated empirical data, were gained from the three purposefully selected participating secondary schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit, Mpumalanga Department of Education (cf. 3.3.1). Throughout the process of data analysis, the researcher transcribed, summarised and presented data from different sources and schools as a single entity to ensure the study's data credibility and trustworthiness (cf. 3.8.1).

Furthermore, the next section presents the study population, sampling and ethical consideration during the process of gaining access to the site. During this process, codes were used for participating schools and participants throughout the study to adhere to the academic ethical requirements as far as confidentiality and right to privacy of the participants are concerned. The above-mentioned ethical requirements were comprehensively discussed in the previous chapter (cf. 3.4.5). The study site was in the Bohlabela Education District and it will be described briefly below.

## **4.2 BOHLABELA EDUCATION DISTRICT AS A STUDY SETTING**

Table 4.2 below shows the sum of secondary schools in the Bohlabela Education District as per circuit to give a picture of the entire study population. This education district has 16 circuits.

*Table 4.2 Bohlabela Education District secondary schools*

Circuit (C)	Secondary schools
C1	8
C2	8
C3	10
C4	9
C5	10
C6	9
C7	8

C8	10
C9	8
C10	3
C11	8
C12	10
C13	9
C14	8
C15	11
C16	10
TOTAL	139

The Mpumalanga Department of Education has four districts, Bohlabela, Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande and Nkangala. The Bohlabela district covers 16 circuits consisting of 139 secondary schools. This study populated within the Bohlabela district, around Circuit 12, in the Mkhuhlu area. The Bohlabela district consists of diverse cultures and ethnic groups (Tsongas, Swatis and Pedis), dominated by black Africans. Bohlabela produces good quality teaching, although the circuits' secondary schools have different academic pass rates. Circuit 12 in the Mkhuhlu area has ten (10) secondary schools. Therefore, three secondary schools from the Mkhuhlu area were purposefully selected in the sampling (cf. 3.4.1 & 3.4.2).

#### **4.3 MKHUHLU AREA AS A STUDY SITE**

The Mkhuhlu area, according to Ndlovu (2010), is characterised mainly by being a poor, underdeveloped rural area. The majority of its population are women and children, since most men migrated to cities or plantations in search of wage labour. Therefore, its population is under a great deal of strain, as the majority of them are unemployed and lack income-generating skills. In short, parents' source of income in the Mkhuhlu area is mainly social grants, labouring on farms and informal trade.

*Table 4.3 Characteristics of participating schools*

<b>School</b>	<b>Principal's tenure (Years)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Economic status</b>	<b>Feeder area</b>	<b>School fees</b>	<b>Language</b>
A	8 years	Rural (Village)	Disadvantaged	Rural	No fee	Tsonga, Swati, Pedi
B	11 years	Rural (Village)	Disadvantaged	Rural	No fee	Tsonga, Swati, Pedi
C	6 years	Rural (Village)	Disadvantaged	Rural	No fee	Tsonga, Swati, Pedi

Schools A, B and C are located within an approximate radius of 15 kilometres apart from one another. School A is located in Ronaldsey Village in Mkhuhlu. It is estimated to have at least 179 learners and 10 teachers. School B is located in a trust, called Culcatta Trust in the Mkhuhlu area with an estimated number of 422 learners and 19 teachers. School C is located in a village called Viyela Village in Mkhuhlu, with an estimated population of 259 learners and 14 teachers. Notably, all the participating schools are serving the poorest communities. Therefore, none of the three selected schools is allowed to charge fees and they are referred to as no-fee schools (cf. 2.6.3). The study sampled three schools and at each school, the principal, teacher, SGB member, three Grade 12 learners and three parents participated. Their biographical data will be outlined below.

## **4.4 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **4.4.1 Biographical data of the principals**

The collected data in relation to personal information of principals, teachers, SGB members, learners and parents, are contained in tables below. Table 4.4 provides a description of the principals who participated in the study.

*Table 4.4 Biographical data of the principals*

<b>School</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>No. of years working as a principal</b>
School A	Principal A	Male	8 years
School B	Principal B	Male	11 years
School C	Principal C	Male	6 years

The principals who were involved in this study had working experience at rural secondary schools ranging between 6 and 11 years. The number of years that they have worked as principals are supposed to have equipped them with enough knowledge on how to work better with teachers, SGB members, learners and parents to improve Grade 12 academic achievement (cf. 2.4.2). It can be concluded that principals know how to involve SGB members and parents in raising Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools (cf. 2.4.2).

As mentioned earlier, teachers were also participants in the study. The following table gives a brief description of data about the teachers.

#### **4.4.2 Biographical data of teachers**

At each school, one teacher participated in the study. Below is the table that provides a description of teacher participants.

*Table 4.5 Biographical data of teachers*

<b>School</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>No. of years working as a teacher</b>
School A	Teacher A	Female	20 years
School B	Teacher B	Female	10 years
School C	Teacher C	Female	15 years

All teachers that participated in this study have working experience ranging from 10 to 20 years. The number of years that they have as teachers has helped them to gain more experience in interacting with SGB and parents. As a result, they have knowledge and understanding of how to interact and work with parents on issues that affect the education of the children (cf. 2.6.3). In addition, they have the ability to give guidance to parents on the importance of the education of their children. This includes the completion of homework; school attendance and good progress (cf. 2.6.3). Below is the table that provides a description of SGB members who participate in the study.



#### 4.4.3 Biographical data of the SGB members

Table 4.6 provides brief information about the SGB members who participated in the study.

*Table 4.6 Biographical data of the SGB members*

<b>School</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number of years involved in SGB</b>	<b>Position occupied in SGB</b>
School A	SGB member A	Female	3	Additional member
School B	SGB member B	Female	1	Chairperson
School C	SGB member C	Male	6	Chairperson

All SGB members that were interviewed in this study were parents. SGB member B and C from School B and C were chairpersons. SGB member A was an additional member on the SGB. All SGB members had more than two years' experience serving as SGB members, except SGB member B, who had only one year's experience. It is assumed that the number of years that SGB members A and C have served as members of SGBs may have at least provided them with knowledge and an understanding of the policies and decision-making as school governors in terms of the involvement of parents (cf. 2.4.3). Experience gained while working as SGB members plays a key role in providing skills on how to encourage parents to be involved in the education of their children (cf. 2.4.3). However, SGB member B had a least number of years' experience as SGB member and this assumes that the member did not have enough experience in governing the school and involving parents in the learners' education (cf. 2.3.2). The biographical data of the Grade 12 learners are described below in Table 4.7.

#### 4.4.4 Biographical data of Grade 12 learners

At each school, three Grade 12 learners were participants in the study. The table below gives a brief description of learner participants.

*Table 4.7 Biographical data of learners*

<b>School</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Years at school</b>
School A	LearnerA1	5 years
	Learner A2	5 years

	LearnerA3	5 years
School B	LearnerB1	5 years
	LearnerB2	5 years
	LearnerB3	5 years
School C	LearnerC1	5 years
	LearnerC2	5 years
	LearnerC3	5 years

All learners who participated in the study have been attending the same school for five years. They all started secondary education at the schools where they were in Grade 12. This assumes that they are familiar with the SGB and the policies of the school (cf. 2.4.3). Furthermore, it assumes that they have enough experience to talk about their academic achievements and reasons why results did not improve at their schools. Moreover, they can also talk about the role of the parents and the support provided to improve their schools academically in Grade 12 (cf. 2.7). Parents who participated in the study are described in Table 4.8 below.

#### 4.4.5 Biographical data of parents

Table 4.8 provides a description of all parents who participated in the study.

*Table 4.8 Biographical data of parents*

<b>School</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>No. of years at school</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Employment (Yes/No)</b>
School A	ParentA1	5 years	Female	No
	Parent A2	5 years	Female	No
	Parent A3	5 years	Female	No
School B	Parent B1	5 years	Female	No
	Parent B2	5 years	Female	Yes (general worker at the school)
	Parent B3	5 years	Female	No
School C	Parent C1	5 years	Female	No
	Parent C2	5 years	Female	No
	Parent C3	5 years	Female	No

All the parents who were interviewed have been parents of the respective schools for at least five years. This experience may have provided them with knowledge and an understanding of some policies that are used in the school for school governance (cf. 2.7). Experience gained by the parents also plays a huge role in providing parents with better communication skills when communication with the school, SGB and learners. It is therefore, assumed that due to five years' experience, parents are able to communicate with schools and their stakeholders.

When collecting data in a research, there are procedures and steps that need to be followed to ensure trustworthiness and credibility. These will be discussed in Section 4.5.

## **4.5 THE DATA COLLECTION PREPARATION PROCESSES**

### **4.5.1 Building trust and gaining access at the study's targeted schools**

The researcher knew that building trust with participating schools was very important for the success of the study. According to Palmer (2015:2), it is an ethical and legal necessity for the researcher to involve human participants through informing them about everything that the study entails. Therefore, the determining factor whether the researcher can continue with the research, is gaining access to people and sites where the study should be conducted. I phoned the principals, briefly explained what this study was about, the purpose of the study and the purpose of the visit, and then negotiated convenient times and dates for the meeting at their schools (cf.3.4.5). However, before that, as noted by Palmer (2015:2), gaining access often requires levels of approval such as the Head of Department of the Provincial Department of Education, circuit manager, principals, teachers, SGB members, learners and parents.

The researcher became familiar with the principals of the three schools; hence, the researcher had face-to-face conversations with them that helped to build an element of trust. Thereafter, the researcher and principals set dates and times for meetings. The first school (School C) was the first to set the date, in the principal's office on 31 October 2018 at 10:00. The interviews date was scheduled for 27 November 2018. School B date was set on the same date, 31 October 2018, at 12:00 and the interview

date was 26 November 2018. Lastly, School A's date was also on 31 October 2018 at 13:00 and interviews were scheduled for 23 November 2018.

All negotiated interviews' meetings took place after the completion of the Grade 12 final examinations as per the Department of Education and the circuit terms and conditions of granting permission for the study. This therefore, granted the researcher easy access as her appointments with the participants did not interrupt the examination process.

#### **4.5.2 The delivery of permission letters**

To conduct a research, researchers need to gain permission to enter the study site and to involve people at the study area (Palmer, 2015:2). Therefore, the researcher delivered all the necessary documents to the targeted three secondary schools. Thus, permission letters to conduct the study from the Mpumalanga Department of Education and confirmation from the University of South Africa (UNISA), the ethical clearance certificate and the consent form signed by the circuit manager were delivered to the targeted participants (cf. 3.4.4). The researcher also provided the school principals with the permission letter so that they could be familiar with and understand the study's structure. In that way, the researcher was welcomed to collect data.

A week before the researcher's visit to the sites to collect data, the researcher phoned the principals, reminding them of the appointment dates for interviews. All three principals were supportive, to the extent that School C's principal said,

*You are more than welcome and I have even informed the staff, SGB, parents and learners about your study. I also motivated the learners that they must participate in your study because one day they will want to further their studies and they will need to collect data through interviews.'*

These words set the researcher at ease and confident to conduct interviews. The principal issued consent letters for the research to the teachers, SGB members, learners and parents, an ethical requirement (cf. 3.4.3). On the same day of the interviews, the researcher analysed the following documents: book with SGB minutes

of meetings, school policies, parents' meeting book, and copies of correspondence between teachers and parents (cf. 3.5.2 & 3.7.1)

## **4.6 DATA COLLECTED THROUGH ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS**

School policies and minutes of meeting books as alternative sources of data to answer the research problem were analysed by the researcher. Triad (2016:2) argues that besides interviews, various text and documents are rich sources of data, which may include letters, reports, minutes of meetings, policy documents, correspondence, memos, oral history and so on from people's actions so that the phenomenon studied is understood more clearly. This means that the researcher need not start from scratch through interviews, but also use documents as source of data. This is known as document analysis.

The researcher mainly read and analysed the policy documents (code of conduct) and minutes of meetings.

### **4.6.1 Code of conduct**

Schools A, B and C are value-driven schools. Their common main values are discipline, responsibility and attendance. However, only Schools A and B highlighted the above-mentioned values on the school properly, not School C. School C only mentioned verbally that they live by values. At each of these three schools, the vision statement and mission statement are prominently displayed. At Schools A and B, at the beginning of the academic year, the principal and teachers draft the code of conduct and all the stakeholders sign the document, including the learner representatives. Then all learners receive the code of conduct together with the vision and mission statements. At School C, the procedure was the same as at Schools A and B, but the difference was that learners and parents are only informed verbally about the code of conduct.

At all participating schools, the code of conduct serves to underline the importance of managing and governing behaviour at the school to promote proactive and constructive behaviour management. A high level of discipline is maintained at Schools A and B, but at School C, the level of discipline is not as high as at Schools A and B.

Discipline as a core value speaks of abiding the set rules of the school and highlights that deviations from such will be dealt with in a constructive manner. Attendance and punctuality as a core value promote seriousness, communication and taking responsibility for one's behaviour, which promotes proactive and constructive behaviour management. Respect, that is, respect for self and respect for others is also a core value that promotes and supports proactive and constructive behaviour management.

#### **4.6.2 Minutes of meetings**

The researcher further analysed minutes of the meetings between the school, SGB and parents. The researcher was able to assess participation by reading the minutes of these meetings.

##### *4.6.2.1 School A: Attendance of meetings by parents*

At School A, there are four meetings in a year. However, for Grade 12s, the SGB and the school call a meeting every month to discuss the learners' progress with parents. These monthly meetings take place after the results of monthly tests. Parents are also encouraged to motivate their children and to give them enough time to study at home. The issue of Grade 12's school camp is discussed at the initial meeting. However, according to the minutes, not all parents attend the quarterly meetings, but the majority of Grade 12 parents do attend.

##### *4.6.2.2 School A: Participation during meetings*

As recorded in the minutes of the four general meetings, few parents offer opinions throughout the meeting. Although they apparently withheld their personal opinions or questions during the quarterly meetings, it was different with the Grade 12 camp meeting and monthly test meetings. Parents' participation was of a better standard, compared to the quarterly meetings.

##### *4.6.2.3 School B: Attendance of meetings by parents*

The minutes showed that four quarterly meetings are planned for a year. However, other special meetings also take place during the year. The attendance of parents is poor, though, for Grade 12 meetings such as the Grade 12 camp. At least attendance

of other meetings that concern Grade 12 was better, though still other parents did not attend.

#### *4.6.2.4 School B: Participation during meetings*

The minutes of the meetings indicated that few parents took the opportunity to speak during the meeting, while the other parents kept quiet for the whole meeting. However, what concerned Grade 12 was that parents did have a say on a few issues, such as the Grade 12 school camp and performance.

#### *4.6.2.5 School C: Attendance of meetings by parents*

According to the minutes of meetings that School C had in a year, parents' attendance is very poor. Out of 259 learners, only six or seven parents attend the quarterly meetings. The situation is the same at Schools A and B, and attendance is better during meetings about Grade 12. These meetings discuss issues such as the school camp and Grade 12 performance.

#### *4.6.2.6 School C: Participation during meetings*

At this school, the minutes show that only six or seven parents, who are also SGB members, give their inputs and opinions during the meetings. Parents do not even attend the meetings that talk to the Grade 12 learners. Attendance is very poor and few parents participate in the discussions.

### **4.7 DATA COLLECTED BY MEANS OF FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS**

The responses of participants in this study presented extensive information on the ways and strategies used by participating schools to improve the effectiveness of the school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement. In this research analysis and report chapter, data were based on the voices of participants in their natural setting. After data transcription, the researcher realised that four major themes with their sub-themes emerged. These themes are discussed below:

#### **4.7.1 Theme 1: Effective communication**

The study revealed that schools and parents communicate by verbal and non-verbal means. Verbal strategies encompass communication such as announcements in class, school assembly or community and telephone calls, while non-verbal strategies include written communication, like sending letters with learners to parents.

##### *4.7.1.1 Subtheme 1: Face to face meetings*

Apart from non-verbal communication, parents also use verbal strategies to communicate with schools. The study findings suggest that some parents prefer to go to school to communicate directly with the school personnel. According to one parent, direct verbal communication assists parents who are mostly illiterate in quickly reaching the school and resolve any issue linked to their children, verbally. The parent indicated in the following quote that visiting the school regarding the behaviour, performance and any other issue that requires the consent of parents is vital, although some parents do not care; they only visit when the school invites them.

*We do go to school to check our children's progress, though the school decided to give Grade 12 learners tests every month. So we are also invited by the school every month to give us report on the performance of learners in these tests (Parent A2).*

However, parents did not support the use of letters as a means of communicating with the schools. For instance, when a child is sick, they normally go to school to report this. The reason for them to go physically is that the majority of them are old and/or illiterate; they cannot read or write. Therefore, parents indicated that they went to the school when they wanted to inform the school about the absence of their children due to different reasons. In this regard, one parent commented as follows:

*When my child is sick, I do go to school to report him but other parents do not do that and they don't care (Parent C1).*

The findings also suggest that not all parents communicate with the school. Those parents only rely on the schools' invitation in order for them to communicate with the school. One parent indicated that they did not have time to report some issues



concerning learners, such as illnesses or other commitments. Instead, they tell learners to report to parents themselves when they return to school.

*I don't go to school to check on my child because I don't have time. I am always searching for piece jobs to take care of my children, so I don't have time to do that. I only go to the school when there is a meeting. I gave the principal all the power to act according to my wish (Parent A3).*

The study also found that some schools use individual discussions for parents to communicate with schools. According to parents, during individual face-to-face discussions, issues are easily solved. One parent indicated that the school sometimes invited parents with their children to meetings and afterwards parents are given a chance to communicate with the individual teachers who teach their children to have discussions with them and their children. The parent further indicated that due to such meetings, she was able to understand what her child needed to improve academically, as stated below (cf. 2.7.3):

*I like it when the school invites us to meetings with our children. When I attend individual meetings with the teachers, I make sure that I emphasise to my son that he must work hard and improve in whatever subject he didn't do well at. And this method really improved my son's academic performance (ParentA3).*

Parent B1 commented in agreement with Parent A3,

*During the meetings, we normally talk about the children's education and teachers encourage us to check the learners' books and help where we can (Parent B1).*

The researcher believes that when parents have individual discussions with teachers and principals, it assists in bringing about understanding of the issue being discussed (cf. 2.7.3). This is supported by Albright (2018:11), that many types of prominent strategies are incorporated in face-to-face communication. These sometimes include telephone conversations, but mostly, in rural areas, personal visits. Albright (2018:11) further claims that most parents find personal visits effective for them to communicate with the school. Parents believe that personal contact can initiate better relationships between parents and the school (Albright, 2018:11).

#### 4.7.1.2 Subtheme 2: Messages via learners

The findings further suggest that the schools communicate verbally with parents by sending messages via learners. According to the principals, the messages are announced during the assembly by the principals, teachers or SGBs, or in class. Learners are then told to pass on the information to their parents at home. One teacher indicated that the school sometimes communicated with parents through learners:

*We sometimes give messages to the learners or concerned learners to tell their parents to come to school. Few parents attend these meetings, so the principal would tell the learners that they must not come to school if they don't bring their parents. This strategy seems to be working because most parents do attend those special meetings (Teacher B2).*

Teacher A3 is in agreement with Teacher B2 that, although the above-mentioned strategy seems to work, some parents do not attend some meetings. The researcher therefore, believes that sending verbal messages to parents through learners might have certain disadvantages. Sometimes learners might distort the information when conveying it to their parents, and at times messages are not delivered because learners forget to do so. Learner A1 and A2 commented in agreement:

*We sometimes forget to give messages to our parents because here at school we get engaged from 6 am to 6 pm and we get home too tired. And because of that our parents end up not attending those meetings (Learner A1 and A2).*

However, Learner C2 concurred with Learners A1 and A2 that he also forgets to tell his parents about school meetings.

They call the parents, yes, they just tell us to tell our parents to come and we sometimes forget (*Learner C2*).

As mentioned earlier, sending messages through learners has disadvantages, such as information being distorted and learners forgetting to give messages to parents. This is supported by Sambo (2016:91), who states that verbal messages do not always reach parents, due to learners who forget or struggle to rephrase the information originally announced at school. In addition, Graham-Clay (2005:118) notes, "written communication is probably the most efficient and effective way we can provide

valuable ongoing correspondence between the school and the home". It is therefore recommended that when schools communicate with parents by means of written communication, they should consider the language spoken in the area by parents, as well as that the document is reliable and understandable.

#### 4.7.1.3 Subtheme 3: Letters

All participating schools used letters as a way of communicating with parents. Whenever there were issues that required their attention, they mostly used letters. All schools indicated that they used letters to communicate with parents. One learner commented that when the school invited their parents to the parents' meeting, it sent letters out with return slips.

*The school writes letters to the parents and give them to the learners so that they may give to parents for full information about the meeting, for example, a letter would specify what kind of a meeting are they invited to, those meetings include reporting on the term academic results (SGB B).*

Principal B was in agreement with SGB B, although he acknowledged that some parents cannot read or write, but a letter is the most effective way of communicating with parents.

*The most common way that we use is writing letters to parents, even though we know that our parents are illiterate, they cannot sometimes read and write, we however, see it working because parents do attend those meetings, though not all of them attend (Principal B).*

However, some parents and SGBs complained about the poor attendance of parents at the school meetings. Most parents and teachers blame those parents who do not attend as being ignorant and not caring about their children's education. It is also noted that most learners live with their biological parents or with their guardians or grandparents. Sometimes some children head families. This somehow contributes to the poor attendance of meetings by parents because guardians and grandparents do not really care much about the education of children in their care. Another parent said:

*We do attend meetings but only few. The SGB does encourage us to attend meetings but still there are parents who do not care about their children's*

*education. They only appear when the school issues the progress reports, it is then they will complain saying the school is failing their children whilst all the yearlong they don't attend meetings (Parent C2).*

However, Principal A noted that it is not that parents are not encouraged by the SGB to attend meetings, but they might need something that would motivate them to attend these meetings. At School A, they had come up with ideas to make parents attend.

*For parents to attend meetings, we had to introduce the new method of providing them with food and you know where there is food at least people attend. That is when they started attending meetings (Principal A).*

The findings suggest that rural schools communicate with parents by means of letters, as they seem to be the most common method all participants use and it seems to be more convenient for principals, teachers and SGBs to reach parents when they want to invite them to attend meetings (cf. 2.7.3). This supports the findings of Gwija (2016:40), who indicates that parents play a huge role in communicating with the school personnel concerning the children's progress both at school and at home. Sibisi (2015:29) notes that letters are mostly used because they are brief and informative so that parents are able to read and understand the message. At rural schools, they normally use the language that is spoken in the area. Sibisi (2015:29) further states that schools prefer this kind of communication, because they are able to include information about school policies (code of conduct), year plans and activities. Therefore, parents do not complain about the communication that the schools use and, according to parents, written letters strengthen the school-home collaboration.

#### *4.7.1.4 Subtheme 4: Progress reports*

It was also noted in the findings that schools used monthly test results and progress reports as other ways of communicating with parents. All participants in this study agreed that issuing progress reports was the most effective way of communicating with parents regarding the performance of learners (cf. 2.7.3). The majority of parents attended such meetings and it was parents who did not attend meetings during the year who began to throw tantrums, especially when their children failed.

*The HoD compiles a monthly report on Grade 12 monthly test results. He would call parents meeting to communicate the results to parents. They do attend (Principal A).*

Principal C is in agreement with Principal A that during issuing of the progress reports, parents attend in numbers and normally communication is face-to-face with teachers.

*All what parents like the most is when the school issues out the progress reports at the end of the year. It is then they will come in numbers and they will start communicating face-to-face with teachers to complain if their children failed. (Principal C).*

The findings of the study suggest that the only time where parents attend in numbers is when the school issues progress reports. It shows that they mostly care about their children's results at the end of the term or the year. Sambo (2016:20) highlights the importance of communication between the school and parents when the progress report is issued. He indicates that schools use progress reports to update parents about the progress of their children. It is also noted that recurring communication is mostly done via the progress reports. The progress reports are very useful because parents are informed about the learners' successes and challenges and they make it easier for parents to understand their children's progress (Sambo, 2016:20). Besides progress reports, all participating schools mentioned that they also used telephones to communicate with parents. This will be discussed below.

#### *4.7.1.5 Subtheme 5: Telephones*

The study identified the schools' use of telephones when communicating with parents. Schools' use telephones and mobile phones that belong to school personnel as well as land line phones in the principals' offices. One teacher reported that schools call parents in case of emergencies, for instance, when the learner misbehaves or when the SGB wants to solve an urgent problem. Principal A said:

*The school usually supplement the letter with the phone call if there is an urgent matter to discuss with the parent (Principal A).*

However, the study findings suggest that the use of telephones at rural schools to communicate with parents differs in terms of the schools' and area's situation.

According to Jooste (2011), the lack of technology prevents communication opportunities for most parents. From this study, it seems that most of the parents are elderly and unable to communicate by means of telephones. Therefore, the schools use different methods, which include letters, word of mouth and phone calls to communicate with parents.

Principal C noted that some parents did not have phones, making it very difficult to use this method effectively with parents:

*Most of the learners in this area stay with their grandparents who do not have phones, so using phone calls doesn't work in such cases (Principal A).*

Nonetheless, Parent A3 agreed with Principal C; she was not old, but she preferred a letter because she did not have a phone:

*I prefer the school to give me a letter than calling me using telephone. This is because I don't have a cell phone so I solely depend on the word of mouth or a letter for communication (Parent A3).*

However, not all participants were against the use of telephones. Some were happy that the school phoned them when they needed them. Other participants stated:

*The school does give us letters when communicating with our parents but they don't like it that much because we sometimes tear those letters and not give them to our parents. So, mostly the school also make phone calls to supplement the letters (Learner B1).*

Learner B1 was in agreement with Learner A3 that the schools used both methods when communicating with parents, namely letters and phones.

*They only use two methods, letters and phones (Learner A3).*

The researcher noticed that all participants agreed that the schools used telephone calls when they communicated with parents (cf. 2.7.3). For some parents, this method was effective, because sometimes when their children forgot to give them letters from school, the school also supplemented letters with telephone calls. To support the above statement, Sambo (2016:23) argues that telephone calls can be made when teachers want to communicate with parents in terms of urgent issues, such as when

the learner is sick or misbehaved and the school wants to arrange a meeting with the parents. The study also found that schools do convene general meetings with parents to discuss issues that concern learners and the school. A detailed discussion follows below.

#### *4.7.1.6 Subtheme 6: General parents' meetings*

In terms of general parent meetings, most participants agreed that the SGB convened at least four meetings a year and at these meetings, they mostly discussed issues concerning the education of learners and the day-to-day running of the school. One SGB member added:

*We meet four times with parents to discuss mostly the learners' academic performances after each examination cycle (SGB B).*

Parents at other schools seem to attend those meetings quarterly, which are convened by the school and the SGBs. However, the study found that most parents are reluctant to attend meetings that affect the education of their children. This in turn, has a very negative effect on the learner performance.

Participants agreed about poor parental attendance of meetings, and commented:

*Some parents when they are called for meetings concerning their children's education, they would complain and say this principal keeps on calling us. We are tired. That is the language they use. They don't care about their children's education. Teachers are good here but parents don't care and it's so discouraging and it's affect the results (Teacher C).*

*Sometimes as a teacher, you try to communicate with parents in these meetings about them buying calculators for their children who are doing Math and Math literacy, because they don't attend these meetings, they don't buy. Learners end up sharing one calculator and that is not good, and might lead to failure (Teacher A).*

*My parents do not attend meetings because the principal calls the meetings unexpectedly. You find that our parents go to work so they don't come (Learner C3).*

*In our area, it is the most remote rural area. Most learners do not have parents. Some stay with guardians or grandparents so no one attends these meetings (Teacher B).*

The *South African Schools Act of 1996* mandates schools to conduct one meeting, known as the Annual General Meeting (AGM), at least once a year. According to Sambo (2016:25), the AGM is mandatory. It is a platform where issues that affect learners are discussed and where parents can communicate with the school. This kind of a meeting should be attended by all school stakeholders, in particular, parents (Sambo, 2016:25). It was revealed that all participating schools held AGMs and other meetings with parents. However, not all parents attended these meetings. However, these meetings continued and concerns about the learners' education were discussed at the meetings.

In summary, based on the findings, it can be concluded that schools send messages directly to parents. They communicate with them through letters, word of mouth, issuing progress reports and general parents' meetings (cf. 2.7.3). However, parents prefer to go to the school and communicate verbally, rather than writing a letter to the school. This is because most parents are old and illiterate; they cannot read or write. Therefore, the communication strategies discussed above seem to work, especially letters, as important information reaches its target. The SGB and parents play a huge role in raising the academic achievement of Grade 12. This will be discussed as theme 2 below.

#### **4.7.2 Theme 2: Raising the academic achievement of Grade 12**

As mentioned in 1.2, for the academic performance to improve, extra classes, including school camps, motivation, completion of homework and giving learners enough time to study and a positive relationship between all the stakeholders play a huge role in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement. The study revealed that motivation, extra classes, homework, reducing chores of learners at home, and having a good relationship with the school are the factors that can help to raise the academic performance of Grade 12.



#### 4.7.2.1 Subtheme 1: Extra classes and school camps

At Schools A and B, extra classes for Grade 12 were the tools that were used the most to raise Grade 12 academic achievement. Morning and afternoon classes were common practice across all three schools. Teacher A and B concurred that their schools did offer morning and afternoon classes.

*Morning and afternoon classes help a lot in raising Grade 12 results and honestly, parents do not have a problem with their children attending those classes (Teacher B).*

However, as much as Teacher A and Teacher B were in agreement about morning and afternoon classes, Teacher A commented in frustration that she was overloaded and the SGB did nothing about that. She also mentioned that she was not in good health, making it difficult for her to offer morning and afternoon classes as she is expected to do:

*The SGB really do not care about the shortage of teachers, like myself, I am not in good health but I am having many classes to teach. I travel a long distance to work hence I am offering morning and afternoon classes. At the same time, I am standing from morning to afternoon as I have many classes and this affect my results. I am teaching the difficult subjects (Math and Math literacy) (Teacher A).*

Principal A was very much aware of the shortage of teachers, but he gave an explanation as to why they did not have enough teachers and that it was very difficult for them to get an SGB teacher at least to relieve the overload of other teachers. He commented:

*Our school is a small school and the department funds us based on the enrolment. This makes it very difficult to appoint SGB teachers. Even our parents are struggling to fund raise because parents do not have enough money. Also you need to note that our school is a no fee school and that means the school is solely dependent on the department's budget and it's not enough (Principal A).*

However, the issue of a lack of budget that hinders the SGB and the school to appoint SGB teachers was highlighted by SGB member B, namely that it was difficult for parents to do a fundraising to address the shortage of teachers. She commented in agreement with Principal A:

*If we don't have a teacher for a certain subject and the department cannot give us a teacher, as the SGB, we organise the SGB teacher and we only give that person what we have as a thank you because we don't have money, parents do not have money either. But we make sure that learners learn (SGB B).*

Another method of extra classes that all participating schools utilised was school camps. All participants agreed that school camps helped a lot in raising Grade 12 academic achievement. The study revealed that parents also supported schools' camps in different ways. Some volunteered to cook and to sleep at the camps and others contributed money towards the school camps. However, the Department of Education (2018:1) urges parents to support and monitor their children during the school camps. This should be done by giving learners enough time to do their take-home activities at home. Participants agreed that they did have school camps.

*We have school camps here at school. We sleep here, there are no phones and teachers are always here to monitor us to see who is studying and who is not (Learner A1)*

*We are having camps from June where learners study (Principal A)*

*These days, we have school camps for learners to perform better (Teacher B)*

*We do encourage them to study their books so that they pass. They also go to school camps to study (Parent C1).*

*Yes, these camps help a lot because we managed to have better results (SGB C).*

As mentioned earlier, parents do support the school camps, but contribute differently towards it. Some contribute money and some offer their voluntary services to assist during the camps. These camps are organised by teachers and the SGB. The study also revealed that these camps do raise the Grade 12 academic achievement.

According to the Department of Education (2018:1), the school camps aim at assisting learners in subject areas that have been identified as areas that need extra support in order to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12s.

Principal A, Teacher B, Teacher C and SGB C agreed that school camps boosted the Grade 12 results.

*After introducing camps, the results went up because parents were involved, they even came to see what was happening in the camp (Principal A).*

*Camps help a lot in raising Grade 12 results. Parents supported it (Teacher B).*

*No, I am not happy with Grade 12 results. We last had involved parents in 2016 and we had good results. Last year we dropped because parents did not want the school camp, saying that they don't have money and that they will assist their children at home. Oh, the results dropped (Teacher C).*

However, SGB C was slightly in disagreement with Teacher C that only parents did not want the school camps. He commented that even the community did not want school camps and that affected their results.

*But in the past two years, parents and the community stopped the school camp and the results dropped (SGB C).*

The findings of the study suggested that parents supported the school camps as extra classes (cf. 2.6.3), but they were not fully involved physically during these camps. Principal B, Principal C, Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C and Parent C2 were in agreement that most parents did not avail themselves during school camps (cf. 2.6.3).

*Verbally, parents do support school camp but to avail themselves, no they don't. It's only teachers who walk an extra mile to see that camping is a success but involvement of parents is minimal (Principal B).*

*No what they normally do is that when we starting planning the school camp, they all support but when the camp is on, they don't come and only few come (Principal C).*

*As long as there is no money, parents do not render any voluntary service. Even the SGB does not assist during the school camp (Teacher A).*

*They don't cook; teachers take responsibility on the camp issue. Parents only supply food for their children (Teacher B).*

*I am the coordinator for the school camp. We call parents to come and sleep over, they don't come. We ask them to at least cook for the learners, still they don't come. So as teachers, we make plans that learners are taken care of in the camp (Teacher C).*

*We only contribute money towards the camp. Those who are employed to cook for learners every day are the ones that supposed to cook for camp (Parent C2).*

Although the study has revealed that normal extra classes and camps as extra classes help to improve Grade 12 academic achievement, parents do not support them in the way the schools expect them to do. However, few parents avail themselves to help during school camps. In addition, motivation plays a huge role in raising Grade 12 academic achievement. The next theme will discuss motivation further.

#### *4.7.2.2 Subtheme 2: Motivation*

The SGB members can advise, guide and direct the principal on issues relating to conflict resolutions, improvement of learner motivation and encouraging parents to be involved in their children's education (cf. 2.4.3). The findings of this study show that some parents do motivate their children by telling how important their education is. Furthermore, some teachers also motivate learners to work hard at their schoolwork so that they have a brighter future. It was also noted that the motivation that they get from parents and teachers help in achieving better results as Grade 12.

Most participants agreed that motivation was what most learners got from the school and parents.

*Their motivation helps us a lot because they make me to realise how important the school is (Learner A1).*

Learner A1 further commented that their parents rewarded them after they had performed well at school.

*Sometimes they give us rewards, such as saying if you can do better in this subject, I will do something for you. That makes me to work harder to get that promised reward (cf. 2.7.2) (Learner A1).*

The SGB, working with other parents can organise educational programmes for learners in order to boost their motivation and parents can give rewards for good performance for motivation (cf. 2.7.2). Learner A3 was in agreement with Learner A1 that their parents motivated them, although his parent did not give or promise any reward. However, she did motivate him. Leepo (2017:45) concurs with the above findings that learners need to be given a purpose to learn by means of motivation.

*You got a chance that you might be something and a chance that I never got. If you are not studying hard, that will make you not to be something better in life. Look at how I am now without education, so you need to work hard to make things better.*

The parent of Learner B1 always motivates her about the importance of education. Learner B1 was in thus agreement with Learner A3. She commented:

*My mother always tells me that you see I am not educated, you need to work hard because education is the only thing, I will leave you with when I die (Learner B1).*

Even Learner C1 agreed with Learner A3 that her parent motivated her:

*My parent encourages me that I must study because life outside is difficult when you not educated (Learner C1).*

According to the findings of the study, teachers do motivate learners about the importance of education in life. Learner C1 commented that their teacher did motivate them.

*Yes, our teachers tell us about their experiences as they are educated, so they encourage us to study hard so that we live good lives (Learner C1).*

As much as most parents motivate their children, some parents do not care about what is happening with the education of their children. Principal B commented:

*Yes, some parents do motivate their children, some do not. After registering their children, they are gone; you will only force them to be involved (Principal B).*

Because the Principal C is aware of the poor motivation by parents of their children, he always encourages his teachers to keep on pushing. He commented:

*I normally tell my teachers to go an extra mile to assist learners because if that is not done, the performance will drop (Principal C).*

SGBs also play a huge role in motivating learners about their studies. SGB B and Parent C3 were in collaboration about the SGB being involved in motivating learners:

*We do motivate learners. We come in the morning and pray with them in the assembly. We then tell them to study regardless of situations that they might be facing, they must study (SGB B).*

*Sometimes, the SGB talk to the learners to motivate them. They even organise pastors to motivate them (Parent C3).*

However, the SGB goes to the extent of encouraging the learner component in the SGB to motivate their fellow learners. SGB A said:

*We also tell the learners representatives to encourage their fellow learners about the importance of their education (SGB A).*

The findings of the study suggest that most parents do motivate their children about the importance of education in their lives. Lemmer (2012:84) claims that the balance between parents' role and the school's role regarding the child's schoolwork should be in symmetry in order for a learner to acquire good academic performance. However, this denotes that the SGB, with the school, should design some measures to help parents in establishing favourable a home environment for learners to learn. The SGB need to advise parents to make homes conducive for learning, and this motivates learners a lot (cf. 2.6.3).

The findings of this study revealed that parents and the schools work together to motivate learners so that their academic achievement may be improved (cf. 2.6.3). Leepo (2017:45) supports the above findings as he explains that learning as a process demands motivation. The lack of motivation amongst learners may sometimes pose a challenge in improving academic achievement, regardless of good teachers and a good curriculum (Leepo, 2017:45). He further argues that learners seldom learn without any purpose, but it is only when they are motivated, especially by their parents and teachers on the importance of education in their lives, that they all realise the purpose of learning. The following theme discusses the importance of parental support in the completion of homework and giving learners enough time to study.

#### *4.7.2.3 Subtheme 3: Completion of homework and giving learners time to study.*

According to Gwija (2016:7), parents have a natural part to play in supporting their children in their school work, such as building the self-esteem of their children, monitoring homework and schoolwork, and even visiting the school to check on their children's progress (cf. 2.6.3). The findings of the study suggest that learners' work needs to be monitored and that learners need more time to study at home. However, most parents are illiterate, but they try to assist their children with homework. Learner A1 commented that she acknowledged that her parent was illiterate and she made a plan in order for her homework to be done:

*The problem is that most of our parents are not educated so when I am given homework, I call my friends to help me (Learner A1).*

In line with the above comment, Learner B3 concurred with Learner A1.

*Actually, my parent did not go to school. What I normally do, I just pose a question on the WhatsApp group that we have and I get help to finish my homework. Also, I have noticed that it's not that our parents don't want to help us hence they even bring us people to help us (Learner B3).*

Illiterate parents do go the extra mile in trying to help learners to complete their homework. Parents C1 and Parent A3 commented:

*I ask if the teacher gave homework, if yes, I tell her to ask elders for help (Parent C1).*

However, the study revealed that the issue of illiterate parents had to be addressed, as learners have to complete their homework. Therefore, principals and teachers commented on the strategy they have adapted.

*The village itself is dominated with illiterate parents, so what we do, we give them homework based on what they have learnt or we give them a chance to do their homework at school before they go home (Principal A).*

*Part of the challenge that hinders parents from helping with homework's is that they are illiterate, so teachers give them a chance to complete them at school (Principal B).*

Teacher B was in agreement with Principal A and B. She commented:

*Sometimes we use our periods to give them a chance to finish their homework because some of do not have parents and they do, they are illiterate (Teacher B).*

However, there are parents who have a negative attitude towards helping learners with their homework. SGB A commented:

*Parents would make comments to say they are not familiar with this syllabus so teachers should help these learners (SGB A).*

The study findings also suggest that as much as the parents are illiterate, some are able to monitor their children on their schoolwork. Learners A1 and C3 agreed:

*My parents took my phone because it disturbs me and I don't watch TV anymore. From 7 pm, they want to see me studying and they keep on checking whether I am studying or not (Learner A1).*

*They banned me from watching TV and they took my cell phone (Learner C3).*

However, the findings also suggest that the school and the SGB do encourage parents to give their children time to study. Learner B3 commented:

*The school usually call our parents to tell them that they should not let us do all the house chores but to give us more time to study (Learner B3).*



Principals B, SGB A, and Parent C3 were in agreement with Learner B3. They commented:

*We sometimes call parents in examination preparation to give their children time to study at home (Principal B).*

*We encourage parents to check their children's books and to give them enough time to study at home (SGB A).*

*We also minimise the house chores and the school tell us to do so (Parent C3).*

It appears that SGBs, parents and the school are capable of working together to raise the Grade 12 academic achievement. According to the findings, it was clear that extra classes, motivation, completion of homework and reduction of chores are considered at the participated schools (cf. 2.6.3). Michael *et al.* (2012:168) argue that the collaboration between parents and teachers enhances the chances of assisting children successfully and becoming involved in school activities. This collaboration or partnership involves helping and showing an interest in the homework of their children. However, there are parents who are still not aware of the importance of their contribution towards the education of their children. Grade 12 academic achievement is dependent on the SGBs' role as school governors. Theme 3 will outline the role of SGBs in the learners' education.

#### **4.7.3 Theme 3: The role of the SGB**

SGBs should make it clear that they are not there to try catch out the principal or stakeholders, but to support, explore and promote a spirit of enquiry within the school (cf. 2.4.3). The study found that at some schools, the SGB is effective and it plays a role in drafting the code of conduct, maintaining discipline and supporting the school to run the school smoothly.

##### **4.7.3.1 Subtheme 1: Code of conduct**

The study revealed that at all the participated schools a code of conduct is mostly drafted by the principal and teachers. According to Principal A, the principal and the School Management Team (SMT) are the ones who draft the code of conduct and then make it available to all school stakeholders:

*We as the SMT of the school together with teachers, we draft the code of conduct and make it available to the SGB for adoption and signatures if they are in agreement (Principal A).*

Principal B, Principal C, Teacher C, SGB B confirmed the view of Principal A. They were in agreement on who drafted the code of conduct:

*The code of conduct is normally drafted by the SMT and teachers, and then we give it to the SGB to adopt it (Principal B).*

*In terms of code of conduct, we do assist the SGB as SMT and teachers because they don't really have that capacity to draft it. Then after, we give it to the SGB for adoption (Principal C).*

*Code of conduct is drafted by the principal and teachers (Teacher C).*

*Yes, we do have code of conduct but we need to amend it hence we are new as the SGB (SGB B).*

However, the code of conduct stipulates the do's and the don'ts at a school for the smooth running of the school. All the above-mentioned participants indicated that their code of conduct highlights all the do's and the don'ts. Most participants mentioned that their code of conduct mainly addressed kinds of misbehaviours. According to Gayatri (2013:65), it also ensures that the school rules are fair and realistic, and that disciplinary proceedings are formally applied in the case of offences. Principal A, Principal B, Principal C, Teacher C and SGB A agreed that the code of conduct addresses the misbehaviour (cf. 2.4.3). They commented:

*In the code of conduct, cell phones, hats, weapons, cigarettes and alcohol are totally not allowed. If a learner is found in one of the above acts, code of conduct disciplinary measures will be taken against them (cf. 2.4.3, Principal A, Principal B, Principal C, Teacher C and SGB A).*

Furthermore, the code of conduct is made available to parents and learners. Principal A said:

*We give parents and learners summarised copies of the code of conduct and we give at the beginning of the year (Principal A).*

*We give the code of conduct to the parents and learners (Principal B).*

However, at School C, parents and learners get no hard copies. They are only told verbally. Principal C commented:

*We then communicate the code of conduct to parents and learners during the first meeting of the year. But we don't give them hard copies, we only tell them by mouth. However, we are planning to give them those hard copies next year (Principal C).*

The SGB, as discussed in 2.4.3, stated that their mandate as school governors is to make sure that discipline is maintained at the school.

As discussed in Chapter 2, SGB's function is to determine the school's code of conduct. Gayatri (2013:65) argues that although the code of conduct is formulated in collaboration with teachers, learners, parents and the SMT, it is supposed to be adopted by the SGB afterwards. Therefore, the SGB is mandated by the SASA that all learners admitted to a school have to comply with the school's code of conduct (cf. 2.4.3).

However, the findings of the study showed that at some schools, the SGB has the power to compile and implement the school's code of conduct, but some schools' SGBs are not fully in control of that. Nonyane (2016:58) indicates that most parents in the SGB would rather let the principal and SMT design, implement or enforce the code of conduct and they would support the school to instil and maintain discipline. The reason that the researcher noticed was that SGBs at most schools ignored the code of conduct due to lack of adequate knowledge and training to implement it effectively. Maintaining discipline also contributes to the rise in Grade 12 academic achievement. Sub-theme 2 addresses how SGBs maintain discipline at schools.

#### *4.7.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Maintaining discipline*

According to Principal C, amongst the duties of the SGB, maintaining discipline is one of them (cf. 2.3.3.1). The findings of the study confirm that SGBs, with parents, do maintain discipline at schools. Teacher B and SGB A agreed with Principal C:

*In case of learner's misbehaviour, the SGB is very supportive in solving issues related to misbehaviour (Principal C).*

*We report the misbehaviour to the principal and the principal calls the SGB. They immediately come to solve the issue (Teacher B).*

*When there is a challenge with behaviour of the learner, the principal would call us and avail ourselves and address the issue (SGB A).*

However, the other SGBs do not fulfil their roles completely. Principal B commented:

*We can say the SGB is partially effective and the reason is that sometimes when there is an emergency and we need them, they don't all come (Principal B).*

Principal C agreed with Principal B with regard to SGBs dealing with discipline:

*SGB's involvement is minimal as we struggle with discipline. They sometimes portray the old mentality that the principal is in charge of everything (Principal C).*

The study revealed that discipline is vital in terms of making sure that there are no disturbances at the school (cf., 2.6.3). This is because the researcher felt that the schools are in need of the SGB to maintain discipline. According to Onderi and Odera (2012:711), at all learning institutions, discipline is very important, because it assists individuals to be responsible and self-disciplined. For learners, discipline ensures that they are able to handle challenges and obligations of living as it gives personal strength to meet all the demands of the school and later in life. Discipline plays a crucial role in stimulating respect between parents and children and between learners and teachers. Moreover, Onderi and Odera (2012:711) further claim that discipline allows an atmosphere of mutual confidence and respect, both within the school and outside the school. The results of that kind of an atmosphere are better teaching and learning environment and better learner academic achievement.

#### 4.7.3.3 Subtheme 3: Supporting the day-to-day smooth running of the school

The SGB should support, explore and promote a spirit of enquiry within the school (cf. 2.4.3). In this study, it was revealed that most SGBs try their best to support the school stakeholders in the running of the school. Principal A said:

*For the past three years, things have changed, the SGB hold meetings with parents to update them with everything that is happening in the school and they mostly discuss things that would take the school far (Principal A).*

He further commented that the SGB encouraged parents to offer voluntary services to contribute to the success of the school:

*It was the idea of the SGB that parents should offer voluntary services to the school, such as helping when learners are in the school camp (Principal A).*

In addition, Teacher B was slightly in agreement with Principal A:

*Our SGB is very effective. When the principal calls them, they are very responsive (Teacher B).*

However, Teacher C, Principal B and the Principal C complained about the support from the SGB:

*No, they don't support. They do nothing. The only SGB member that sometimes support, is the treasurer (Teacher C).*

*I think the SGB does not encourage parents to be involved in their children's education. This is because of the number of parents that attend meetings that is very small (Principal B).*

*Even during the camp, SGB does not support (Principal C).*

It is very important to note that schools need support for it to produce better results (cf. 2.4.3). The study revealed that code of conduct plays a role in maintain discipline and discipline helps in dealing with behaviour that might disturb learners in their learning. In addition, for the school to excel, a parental body is needed to support all the stakeholders to improve the Grade 12 results (cf. 2.4.3).

The above findings of the study revealed that parents are partially involved in the day-to-day running of the school (cf. 2.7.1). Maluleke (2014:21) supports parental involvement in the running of the school. He emphasised that teachers and parents should work in collaboration, as they are both important in the upbringing of the child, particularly concerning the child's education. Therefore, the collaboration between schools and parents and communication between the two should be emphasised. Based on the findings of the study, most SGBs and parents did not seem to be aware of their role as parents in the education of their children.

Maluleke (2014:21) further argues that some parents are not sure about their role in their children's education. Some even think that being illiterate precludes them from being actively involved in the education of their children as they sometimes feel no one will ever listen to them. In short, such parents think that the principal is the only person to be listened to as far as the education of their children is concerned. Theme 4 below discusses two factors that contribute towards a drop in Grade 12 academic achievement.

#### **4.7.4 Theme 4: Causes of a drop in Grade 12 achievement**

##### *4.7.4.1 Subtheme 1: Absenteeism*

Some participants acknowledged that learner absenteeism was a problem at their schools (cf. 1.1), but few cases were reported on that. They perceived the factors that mainly contribute to learner absenteeism as family, individual and school. Regarding the absenteeism due to individual interest, Principal A said:

*There was an incident of a learner who happened to be absent for 10 days. For the school to know, the parent came to report her missing child and only to find the child has been with her boyfriend (Principal A).*

Teacher B agreed Principal A, although her comment was about learner absenteeism due to family issues. She commented:

*There is learner whom I realised that her performance dropped and her attendance was very poor. I could not trace her parents to communicate with them. I ended up calling her neighbour who was once the learner in this and*

*now she is in university. She told me that the learner had no parents, she stays alone at her parents' home and her granny stays at her own home and that is the reason she is not attending regularly (Teacher B).*

Teacher B further highlighted the issue of schoolwork contributing towards absenteeism:

*Some learners do come to school but you find them being not present in some classes, especially when they have not done homework for that particular period, and that has a negative impact in the academic achievement of the learner (Teacher B)*

However, despite of the above comments, Teacher C disagreed with Principal A and Teacher B to a certain extent. She mentioned that at her school, Grade 12 attendance was good. She commented:

*When the child is absent, report the learner. But in this school, there are few absentees (Teacher C).*

The above findings concur with assertions made by Simelane (2015:23) that schools are faced with a high learner absenteeism rate, which results in a high failure rate. In short, such behaviour compromises learners' school time, because it interferes with their schoolwork; hence, they are away from school for long periods whilst teaching and learning continue at school or in class and that affects their academic achievement (cf. 1.1). Therefore, Katanga (2016:28) and Gwija (2016:42) recommend that the contribution of parents in the education of their children is very significant and crucial for learners to perform better academically. In short, parents should ensure that their children attend school regularly, they should maintain regular contact with the school and volunteer at the school, if necessary (Gwija, 2016:42). Attendance, according to Katanga (2016:23), is beneficial to learners in terms of academic achievement. This is because when learners are present in the class, they are able to complete and submit the assignments given to them, which may result in learner achievement and better performance in Grade 12.

#### 4.7.4.2 Subtheme 2: Illiteracy of parents

Principal A commented about learners who stayed with illiterate grandparents. He mentioned that some grandparents did not even attend meetings and they did not help learners with their schoolwork (cf. 1.1). He made the following comment:

*Think of grannies who are illiterate and they stay with these children and they can't even help them with any school work hence they are illiterate (Principal A).*

Even some parents are illiterate. Learners B1 and B2 said:

*When I am given homework, I just go around and ask people who might know. If they do not help me, I just write anything, as long as I wrote something (Learner B1).*

Learner B2 shared same sentiments with Learner B1 on the issue of their parents not being able to assist them in doing their schoolwork due to illiteracy. She said:

*Aah, when I am stuck in doing my homework, I just leave it because my mom will tell me that she does not know. When the teacher asks, I tell him or her that I did not know how to do it (Learner B2).*

However, Parent A3 suggested that even if the parents are not educated, they had to check their children's schoolwork. She commented:

*The fact that I am illiterate does not mean that I must not check my child's books, I do. I just ask his little brother to check his books with me and he will tell me the dates on the book and whether the task is marked or not (Parent A3).*

As discussed by Nyama (2010:20), most children who have parents who are illiterate are more likely to be illiterate themselves. These children are more likely to drop out of school than other children would. Illiteracy might cause a considerable problem for the support system of the learners, as most illiterate parents are dependent on others to function. For instance, illiterate parents might struggle to read and interpret letters from their children's schools and to assist their children with schoolwork. Illiterate



parents sometimes feel that they cannot help their children and they feel embarrassed to contribute to their children's education, yet they can.

However, Nyama (2010:20) further notes that even if some parents are illiterate and do not understand what their children learn at school, they can at least spend some time with their children each day, trying to motivate them. Therefore, parents can still play a vital and valuable role in their children's education, even if they are illiterate, by showing interest, listening and motivating them when they do their schoolwork. Therefore, when learners are motivated, especially by their parents, they are most likely to perform better academically (cf. 2.7.2).

#### **4.8 SUMMARY**

After a brief introduction, this chapter sets forth the purpose of the study and then outlined questions that were formulated in Chapter 1. Based on the questions that were formulated in Chapter 1, main themes and sub-themes were formulated. The research process was discussed in detail, including all procedures and steps that were followed to ensure trustworthiness. The chapter further discussed the biographical data of the participants. Thereafter, data obtained from the document analysis were discussed and interpreted. The main themes from data collected through face-to-face interviews were discussed. This section was divided into four main themes, which each had sub-themes. The findings of the study were compared to the literature review conducted in Chapter 2 and new literature review.

#### **4.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In this chapter, the research results were analysed, interpreted and synthesised. The results were also discussed and synthesised to put forward the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at Mpumalanga rural schools. According to Gwija (2016:33), school performance is part of the general improvement of a school. However, school improvement is about more than simply getting the best results, but it is not easy to see how governors can contribute to raising the standard when they do not actually teach learners, but their engagement plays a major role in improving the school's performance. Therefore, for a school to be successful; that is, obtaining good results in examinations (both internal

and external), important stakeholders, particularly the SGB and parents in general contribute to that.

Four main themes were identified from the literature as well as the face-to-face interviews and document analysis. They gave insight into school governance and parental involvement from a systemic point of view, as well as what role the SGB and parents play in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at Mpumalanga rural schools. The four main themes and their sub-themes were identified as:

Theme 1: Effective communication

- Sub-theme 1: Face-to-face meetings
- Sub-theme 2: Messages via learners
- Sub-theme 3: Letters
- Sub-theme 4: Progress reports
- Sub-theme 5: Telephones
- Sub-theme 6: General parents' meetings

Theme 2: Raise academic achievement of Grade 12

- Sub-theme 1: Extra classes and school camps
- Sub-theme 2: Motivation
- Sub-theme 3: Completion of homework and giving learners time to study

Theme 3: The role of the SGB

- Sub-theme 1: Code of conduct
- Sub-theme 2: Maintaining discipline
- Sub-theme 3: Supporting the day-to-day smooth running of the school

Theme 4: contributory factors towards a drop in academic achievement of Grade 12

- Sub-theme 1: Absenteeism
- Sub-theme 2: Illiteracy of parents

The above themes were discussed using the motion school governance and parental involvement from rural areas' perspective.

The final chapter of this dissertation will synthesise and consolidate the findings of the study by providing a summary, making recommendations and drawing conclusions.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the summary, findings and recommendations of this study. The main aim of this study was to determine the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at Mpumalanga rural schools. The sub-research questions of the study were:

- What are the contributions of the SGB and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?
- What are the characteristics of an effective SGB?
- What are the strategies that can be implemented by the SGB and parents to raise the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?

These sub-research questions will be discussed in the research conclusions of this chapter.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 1 introduced the study by providing information in terms of the background (cf. 1.1). The rationale of the study (cf. 1.7) was to find out the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at Mpumalanga rural schools. Furthermore, the study endeavoured to address the challenges and make recommendations towards the findings that may bring about an improvement in establishing strategies to involve SGBs and parents effectively in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at rural schools.

When parents, learners and other school stakeholders work in collaboration with one another in building a positive relationship, that help them to reach and achieve their goals of improving the Grade 12 academic achievement. This can be done by making sure that there is effective teaching and learning, improved attendance and good behaviour. Parental involvement in schools, in particular, assists parents to be hands-on in terms of their children's progress. The main aim of the research was to find out

whether the sampled schools do involve parents in the education of the learners to raise the academic performance of the Grade 12 and how are they involved. Therefore, the focus of this research was on finding out how the SGB and parents at the schools under study work together to raise the Grade 12 academic achievement. The main research question for this study was phrased as follows:

How could the SGB and parents work adequately together to raise Grade 12 academic achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools?

#### *Sub-questions*

- What are the contributions of SGBs and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?
- What are the characteristics of an effective school governing body?
- Which strategies by the SGB and parents will be required to improve the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?

The conceptualisation of the role of school governing bodies at schools was discussed (cf. 1.2). A brief preliminary literature review (cf. 1.3) was given and the research methodology (cf.1.3) was outlined. Once it was clear what effect school governance and parental involvement had in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at rural schools, the recommendations on how to address the challenges that rural schools experience in establishing the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at Mpumalanga rural schools could be discussed (cf. 1.5).

Chapter 2 provided a literature study to afford a definite foundation on which to pose the relevant research questions presented in the interview schedule. Research done on trends and development theories with regard to the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at rural schools in other countries was compared to the effectiveness of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at South African rural schools (cf. 2.2). Next, the composition of SGBs and their roles and functions were discussed (cf. 2.3). This was followed by a detailed discussion on the importance of SGBs and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at schools (cf. 2.6 and cf. 2.7).

Chapter 3 reported on the research method and strategy used to conduct this study. The research design was explained, along with the research paradigm (cf. 3.3.2). A constructivist paradigm was chosen (cf. 3.3.2) as the research paradigm, a philosophical viewpoint where people construct and interpret the phenomenon using their experiences in relating the knowledge of what they know in order to understand the reality of the phenomenon (cf. 3.3.2).

This chapter explained that the qualitative method was used to conduct this study (cf. 3.3.3), which then led to the rationale for choosing the qualitative method (cf. 3.3.4). Next, the research problem was stated, together with the sub-problem (cf. 3.3.5). The objectives with the study research were linked to the study (cf. 3.3.6). Purposeful sampling was used for the population and sampling, as a small group of individuals who have knowledge of the topic was identified (cf. 3.4.1). The sample comprised three schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit in the Bohlabela region of Mpumalanga Province. These schools were purposefully chosen, as they were able to provide information about the phenomenon being investigated (cf. 3.4.2).

Consent was obtained from all participants through letters submitted by the researcher to them. Participants were asked to confirm that they were willing to participate in the study, by signing consent forms and returning them to the researcher. Next, all participants received copies of their signed consent forms as evidence that their participation was voluntarily (cf. 3.4.3). Before data were collected, clearance was obtained from the UNISA Ethics Committee (cf. 3.4.3).

The researcher used semi-structured face-to-face interviews and document analysis as instruments to collect data (cf. 3.5.1). The documents that were retrieved were analysed (cf. 3.5.2). The researcher recorded each interview using a digital voice recorder to ensure that data were safely recorded (cf. 3.6). Data from interviews were transcribed in written form. After transcribing, the researcher identified the emerging themes. The data analysis and presentation were then discussed (cf. 3.7). The coding was done manually without the use of a computer software program. Data presentation took place and declared correct (cf. 3.7). Trustworthiness and credibility of the study were also discussed (cf. 3.8).

Chapter 4 presented the data from both document analysis and face-to-face interviews. The chapter firstly set the aim of the study, outlining the sub-questions that were formulated in Chapter 1 (cf. 1.5). It further highlighted the research process, including procedures and steps that were followed to ensure trustworthiness and credibility (cf. 4.5). Data obtained from document retrieval were also discussed, analysed and interpreted (cf. 4.6). From the formulated sub-questions from Chapter 1, four themes with sub-themes were developed and discussed in detail (cf. 4.7). Verbatim quotations from participants' transcripts were used to ensure the guarantee in terms of trustworthiness of the study (cf. 4.7). Throughout the discussion of the themes, the empirical findings were cross-referenced and reconciled with the reviewed literature (cf. 4.7).

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the main findings of the study. It also shows how the findings of the study are aligned with the main aim, objectives and research questions. In line with the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement at Mpumalanga rural schools, key recommendations are then discussed, followed by avenues for future research. The chapter also outlines the limitations of the study and the conclusion.

### **5.3 THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

The findings of the study will be discussed below according to the four sub-research questions of this study (cf. 1.5).

#### **5.3.1 Findings regarding sub-research question one**

**What are the contributions of the SGB and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?**

The responses from the interviews gave an insight that the SGB and parents do not fully play their roles in the education of their children. The expression that the SGB and parents gave varied from comments to comments regarding them as contributors of poor academic achievement of Grade 12 learners. All participants interviewed in this study agreed that they did have an SGB and that parents were involved in the learners' education though they also acknowledged that some SGBs were not fully effective and some parents would give excuses when they had to be involved (cf. 1.3,

cf. 2.4.3 and cf. 4.7.1.6). Several participants mentioned that if parents could be fully involved in the learners' education, Grade 12 academic achievement would improve (cf. 1.4 and cf. 4.7.2.2). Principals noted that, when SGB elections are conducted, parents do not attend and as a result, same parents are re-elected to serve in the SGB. That could result in an ineffective SGB (cf. 2.3.2 and cf. 4.7.3.3). The Basic Education Rights (2010:79) highlights that governors normally serve for three years.

The research noted that two of the schools (School A and School B) have an SGB that is involved, especially on the issues that talk to the academic achievement of the Grade 12 learners (cf. 4.7.3.3). The third school's SGB is not effective at all in academic matters, but only in disciplinary issues. At School C, teachers and parents were discouraged about the way their SGB did not provide the support expected of them (cf. 4.7.3.3). At School C, teachers felt that the SGB merely views the education of the child as dependent only on the principals and teachers. The SGB at this school does not even encourage parents to attend meetings. The SGB itself does not know their importance; hence, at School C, only four of the parents' components are left, as three have withdrawn (cf. 4.7.3.3). Parents should form the majority in the composition of the SGB (cf. 2.3.2). All the participants at School C, even the SGB chairperson who was interviewed felt bad about the ineffectiveness of the SGB, as some duties of the SGB, for example working with the school to raise the academic achievement of the Grade 12s are not carried out effectively (cf. 4.7.3.3). At School B, only the principal (Principal B) was not happy about the involvement of the SGB and parents in raising the Grade 12 academic achievement at the school (cf. 2.7.4). The Principal B commented that sometimes when the SGB is needed by the school, they do not avail themselves and even parents do not attend meetings that are called by the SGB and the school to discuss the learners' progress (cf. 4.7.3.3).

The ineffective support from SGB and parents was the significant finding in connection with the poor academic achievement of Grade 12 learners. Principal A and B shared the sentiments that the results drop a lot when the SGB and parents do not support the school (cf. 4.7.3.3). Principal C agreed with Principal A and B and added that when parents stopped supporting the continuation of school camps as extra classes, the Grade 12 results declined drastically. Many teacher participants expressed similar sentiments (4.7.2.1).



The researcher noted that learner absenteeism was also a factor that contributed towards a decline in Grade 12 academic achievement. However, participants mentioned few cases for Grade 12 absenteeism (cf. 2.7.2 and cf. 4.7.4.1). A teacher at School B (Teacher B) highlighted the issue of the community that the school serves, namely that some learners do not stay with their biological parents; they stay with guardians or grandparents. Therefore, they are the learners that are affected the most by absenteeism, according to School B (cf. 4.7.4.1). This causes a decline in learner performance and leads to poor academic achievement. Therefore, SGBs and parents play a crucial role in making sure that learners attend school every day so that they excel academically (cf. 2.7.2 and cf. 4.7.4.1).

The researcher noted that most parents are illiterate. This sometimes makes them unable to help where they are supposed to help. This includes the completion of homework (cf. 2.6.3). All the principals and teachers agreed that most parents are illiterate and cannot even help with any schoolwork. This has a negative impact on the academic achievement of the learner (cf. 4.7.4.2). A learner at School B (Learner B2) commented that when the school gives homework that is difficult and the parent cannot help, she just writes anything for the sake of writing. According to Spencer (2017:1), homework plays a crucial role in the performance of learner and school as it serves as a tool to improve a learner's general understanding of a subject. Furthermore, Spencer (2017:1) notes that completing homework and improved academic achievement are correlated and they both maintain the home-school involvement. This lack of education in parents, according to the findings of the study, therefore affects the academic achievement of learners.

### **5.3.2 Findings regarding sub-research question two**

#### **What are the characteristics of an effective SGB?**

A key finding in connection with the effective SGB at schools was that most SGBs still believe that the principal has all the powers in the day-to-day running of the school. However, the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* stipulates that the power bestowed

on the SGB allow them to perform their duties that affect and sustain the smooth, efficient and effective running of schools (cf. 2.6.4).

The researcher noted in the interview process that not all SGB members are involved in the drafting of the school code of conduct. They only adopt it after the principal and teachers have drafted it. It was noted that some SGB members seemed not to be aware of what the code of conduct entails. SGB member at School C (SGB C) indicated that when it comes to discipline, the SGB makes it a point that discipline is maintained in the school (cf. 2.4.3 and cf. 4.7.3.1). However, amongst other things, the code of conduct also addresses the issue of learner attendance (cf. 2.3.3.1 and cf. 4.7.3.1).

The study findings revealed that the SGB only features when misbehaviour occurs that needs to be corrected. Unlike at School A and B, SGB members were aware of their extensive roles. The participants (SGB A and B) mentioned that they also motivate learners, address teachers who perform poorly and they ensure the smooth daily running of the school (cf. 2.4.3 and cf. 4.7.2.2). Parents, learners and teachers at School A and B indicated that the SGBs at their schools were involved. However, for School C, even the principal (Principal C) acknowledged that their SGB was ineffective and that affects the Grade 12 results (cf. 4.7.3.3).

### **5.3.3 Findings regarding sub-research question three**

#### **What are the strategies that can be implemented by the SGB and parents to raise the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public schools?**

The researcher found that most SGBs and parents try to work together in supporting the schools to raise the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners. It was revealed in the findings that all three schools use almost the same strategies to raise the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners. Extra classes, motivation, effective communication and giving learners enough time to study at home were identified as the most effective ways that can be implemented to bring about change in Grade 12 academic achievement (cf. 2.7.3 and cf. 4.7).

However, the researcher noticed that SGB and parents were not pioneering these strategies, except at School A where the principal (Principal A) indicated that school

camps, as a form of extra classes, were pioneered by the SGB and the school adopted it. However, for School B and C, the idea of school camps came from the schools (cf. 4.7.2.1). Nevertheless, all participants agreed that extra classes are effective in terms of raising Grade 12 academic achievement (cf. 2.7.3 and cf. 4.7.2.1).

Teacher B at School B also noted that extra classes help, to an extent that even learners who do not have enough time to study at home are able to catch up and study during the extra classes. Grade 12 learners themselves acknowledged that extra classes play a huge role in raising their academic achievement (cf. 2.7.3 and cf. 4.7.2.1). However, the challenge that emerged was that some parents do not fully support the classes. It was noted that parents only provide for learners during the school camps but they do not cook, monitor and sometimes sleep at those camps (cf. 2.6.3 and 4.7.2.1). School C went to the extent of stopping those extra classes and the effect of that was huge on the results of Grade 12. Principal at School C (Principal C) commented that the very same year that there were no extra classes (camps), there was a drastic decline in the Grade 12 academic achievement (cf. 4.7.2.1).

What was notable, the motivation learners got from the school and parents (cf. 2.4.3 and cf. 4.7.2.2). All learner participants interviewed felt that the motivation that they receive from their parents gives them purpose to study hard (cf. 2.4.3 and cf. 4.7.2.2). Because most parents were illiterate, they used that illiteracy to motivate them that being uneducated results in poverty. According to Learner A3, the fact that their parents are illiterate and they live a life of poverty, empower their parents to encourage them to study hard and change their parents' situations. Even teachers do motivate learners about the importance of education (cf. 2.4.3 and cf. 4.7.2.2). Learner C1 expressed appreciation for what their teachers always say about the importance of education, and this makes them study hard.

Not only parents and teachers motivate learners; the SGB also plays a crucial role in motivating learners. Teacher A and B agreed that SGB did call parents' meetings to encourage parents to be involved in their children's education. Principal A agreed by stating that every month, the SGB calls parents to present to them the Grade 12 monthly test results and to have one-on-one meetings with teachers concerned (cf. 2.7.3 and cf. 4.7.1.4). At School B, SGB B mentioned that before the Grade 12 examinations start, they normally go to the assembly to motivate Grade 12 learners

about the importance of studying during the examinations. The SGB further calls parents to encourage them to give their children enough time to study at home by reducing their children's chores (cf. 2.7.2 and cf. 4.7.2.2).

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

The main objective of this study was to establish how school governance and parental involvement raise the academic achievement. In light of the findings from the collected data, recommendations based on both the literature study and empirical investigation can now be proposed. Furthermore, the SGB and parents as stakeholders that need to play their roles in raising Grade 12 academic achievement. Therefore, the findings of this study may assist in focusing on the future development effort of SGBs and parents to support schools.

### **5.4.2 Recommendation with regard to research objective one**

Research objective one was to determine contributions that the SGB and parents make towards poor academic achievement amongst Grade 12 learners at public schools.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The study revealed that most parents in rural schools are old or illiterate. This makes it difficult for them to be fully involved in the education of their children. To address the issue of grandparents and illiterate parents, the principal should conduct parents' workshops once per term. At these workshops, parents should be reminded of what is expected from them pertaining to the education of their children. This includes the importance of completing schoolwork. During those workshops, parents can be advised to assist their children by organising people in the community who are literate to assist their children (cf. 2.7.2). Some of the learner participants confirmed that they do consult such people on their own and some parents organise people to help their children with schoolwork. During the workshops, motivational speakers can be organised to motivate parents to involve themselves in the education of their children and the importance of education. Even former learners who have graduated or are working can be organised to motivate parents and their children (cf. 2.7.2).

The principals should in the school year plan include parents' workshop days. This might at least be done once every quarter, preferable before learners write their quarterly tests. These workshops would be of great significance in this regard as Menheere and Hooge (2010:153) confirm that schools could provide skills to parents on how they could support their children's academic development during the parents' workshops. Therefore, for these workshops to be effective, learners and parents, especially illiterate parents should be given opportunity to participate around topics like motivation, perseverance, responsibility, cooperation and initiative. This would give both learners and parents full ownership and confidence in the education process.

#### **5.4.3 Recommendation with regard to research objective two**

Research objective one was to determine the characteristics of an effective SGB. It was revealed through the finding of the study that the involvement of the SGB in decision-making can give the SGB authority to implement those decisions for the improvement of Grade 12 academic achievement. The SGB, in terms of school governance, represents the whole school and the community; that is, parents, teachers, learners, the staff of the school and the community that the school is serving. They set out the direction for the school through the formulation and implementation of policies (cf. 2.4).

**RECOMMENDATION:** Principals and teachers should not formulate policies such as code of conduct on their own; they need to involve the SGB. It was noted that the SGB only adopt the code of conduct. For SGBs to own the policies, they must formulate those policies with the SMTs. This will be helpful during the implementation of such policies, because they would know exactly what those policies are saying. The SGB will also be aware that, for instance, the uniform issue of misconduct is not only misbehaviour but also learner absenteeism, both leading to failure. They also need a section on academic achievement and how they want to foster it at their schools.

Learners should not only be told about the code of conduct. The code of conduct should be outlined in the learners' diaries, which rural school principals need to request from the department. The code of conduct should be written in the local language so that parents would be able to read and understand. It should be made available during its discussion and, most importantly, before the code of conduct is given to all the

stakeholders, parents need to sign the code of conduct. Above all, principals should allow SGBs to govern (cf. 2.7.2).

Furthermore, SGBs need to know that they are the governors at schools and as governors, they should be clear that they are not there to try catch out the principal or stakeholders, but to support, explore and promote a spirit of enquiry at the school. They should support the principal and other stakeholders – mainly parents – to improve the school in general and school performance in particular.

Moreover, SGB members can advise, guide and direct the principal on issues relating to conflict resolutions, improvement of learner motivation and encouraging parents to be involved in their children's education. When the SGBs execute their responsibilities as governors, their effectiveness at rural secondary schools would result in great Grade 12 academic achievement (cf. 2.4.3). Therefore, SGBs at rural schools might become more effective by implementing the following actions:

- Being involved in decision making
- Assisting all parents, including illiterate parents to be involved
- Being equipped by principals for them to know their roles

#### **5.4.4 Recommendation with regard to research objective three**

Research objective three was to determine what strategies that can be implemented by the SGB and parents to raise the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public schools.

**RECOMMENDATION:** During the interviews, it was noted that most SGBs do not seem to know the powers vested in them as governors. Their powers are not limited to conflict resolution, motivation and encouraging parents to be involved, but their powers go as far as improving learner achievement, as well as to guide and advise principals on matters that assist in raising Grade 12 academic achievement, even the formulation of policies such as attendance, homework and subject choice policies (cf. 2.7.2).

The study found that SGBs are trained centrally by the circuit. This, according to the researcher's findings, limits the SGB, especially with illiterate parents. Illiterate parents

often have an inferiority complex; leading to them not being able to express themselves in case they need clarity. The researcher recommends that SGBs be trained thoroughly. Each school should conduct training for its SGB and give them certificates of attendance to motivate them. School principals need ensure that they are objective at all times when are engaging SGB members. All SGB members are equal and should be treated the same. Therefore, any idea that comes from any member should be considered as long as it is towards leading the school in the right direction. This would avoid the issue of principals who sometimes consider ideas from SGB members that are semi-literate rather than of those who are illiterate. If that can be done, illiterate SGB members would feel comfortable to express their views. This is based on the comment that Principal C made that four out of seven members withdrew from the SGB. The moment the issue of treating SGB members equally is addressed, SGBs would work effectively towards improving Grade 12 academic achievement (cf. 2.7.2).

Furthermore, the study findings show that the communication method that schools use most is messages via learners, letters and meetings (cf. 2.6.3). Some learner participants stated that they forget to convey messages to their parents, and if they are given letters, they sometimes forget to give it to their parents. This leads to poor communication, leading to parents sometimes not attending meetings. However, Parent C2 was clear that there are parents who deliberately do not attend meetings because they do not care. In addition, Learner C3 noted that their parents do not attend meetings because they are at work during the week.

Therefore, the researcher would recommend that letters that are sent to parents should be written in the parents' language (cf. 4.7.1.3) so that the method would be effective. In addition, the school should also make sure that learners give letters to parents by adding return slips to be signed by parents to show that they have received the letters. As the study revealed, at most meetings, the academic achievement of learners is discussed. It is also recommended that during parents' meetings, teachers should set clear targets of how students could improve in their learning and these targets must be monitored by the school management, middle leaders and teachers of Grade 12 on a monthly basis.

For participants mostly at Schools B and C, the poor attendance by meetings by parents is a worrying factor. Sometimes it is very difficult for schools to reach quorum at meetings, but meetings continue with the small number of parents in attendance. The danger is that whatever the parents who attend discuss, those in absentia do not know. This might lead to parents not being involved (cf. 2.6.3). To address that factor, the researcher recommends that the principal and teachers should sacrifice their time and conduct meetings in the afternoons, where every parent who works is assumed to be back from work in the afternoons. In addition, meetings can be conducted on Saturdays, when almost all parents would be available. This would at least allow parents to attend meetings and discuss their children's education. Students with poor attendance should be given an attendance-monitoring report. These attendance-monitoring reports should be monitored by classroom teachers on a daily basis SMTs should be informed if a learner does not attend school and parents or guardians should be informed immediately as well.

Lastly, the findings of the study revealed that parents do not provide the necessary resources for their children to excel academically. Learners from poor backgrounds might not perform because they are not likely to receive adequate basic things such as money to buy the necessary learning equipment like calculators for them to perform better (cf. 1.3). At School A, the research findings contradicted the literature (cf. 1.3). Teacher A commented that some parents fail to buy their children the calculators they need for Mathematics or Mathematical literacy. Teacher A further stated that most learners end up sharing those calculators during examinations and they are likely to fail. Surprisingly, Teacher A noted that the very same learners who do not have calculators change their hairstyles every month. Therefore, the researcher recommends that, during meetings, principals and teachers need to inform parents that if learners do not have the necessary learning equipment it affects their academic achievement. It is therefore very important that learners have the necessary learning equipment for them to excel academically.

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**



This study of the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement is limited to 3 out of 139 secondary schools in the Bohlabela region in Mpumalanga.

The small size of the sample, typical qualitative research (cf. 3.3.3), is the most obvious limitation of the study. This cannot support the general theory on the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement at rural schools because different schools and communities will lead to different findings.

The research was also purposefully limited to rural secondary schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit in Mpumalanga. Purposeful sampling was used to select principals, teachers, SGB members, Grade 12 learners and parents for interviews (cf. 3.4.2). The schools and participants were selected on the ground of their willingness to take part in the research and this implies that different results might be obtained in different circumstances.

The main aim of the research was to understand the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement from the participants' perspectives. These findings were reported on in detail in Chapter 4. Although no attempt is made to generalise the findings, the problems experienced by the schools pertaining to school governance and parental involvement at these schools could hold true for schools in other rural areas.

In spite of these limitations, the rich information of this qualitative study (cf. 3.3.3) provides information that could be used for further research.

## **5.6 AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study confirms that there are rich future prospects for research in connection with the effect of school governance and parental involvement in raising Grade 12 academic achievement in rural schools.

- The first avenue for further research would be to establish the correlation between parental involvement and academic achievement of Grade 12

learners. This would include all the contributions that parents make towards the good academic achievement of learners.

- The second further research option would be to investigate strategies to involve illiterate parents in their children's education in rural schools. This is because the majority of parents in rural areas are illiterate. This might be the reason why they are not always fully involved in the education of their children. Research about possible ways that schools might employ to assist such parents, could be another option.
- The third future research avenue would be to determine the role of the principal in helping parents to make sound decisions at school. This will help to encourage parental involvement in schools.
- The last research avenue would be to establish the effect of SGBs being trained to work with schools and parents in South African rural schools. SGBs would know exactly what powers are vested in them, enabling them to be as effective as possible as school governors.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

The main aim of this study was to establish the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 academic achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools. It further investigated the strategies that the SGB and parents can implement to raise the academic achievement of Grade 12 learners at public schools.

The study revealed the following solutions:

- SGB to be fully involved in decision-making.
- Elderly and illiterate parents to be assisted.
- Equip SGB in executing their duties.
- Effective communication between the school and parents.
- Parents to support the school.

The present study has spotlighted that much still needs to be accomplished in terms of making SGBs govern as expected, as well as developing parental involvement in improving Grade 12 academic achievement. If the SGB is given sufficient training and

proper support by principals, it is believed that school governors and parents would be effective enough to improve Grade 12 academic achievement, specifically at rural secondary schools.

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## ANNEXURES

### Annexure A:

### Letter for ethical clearance from the University of South Africa



#### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2018/08/15

Dear Ms Monamoleli

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2018/08/15 to 2021/08/15

Ref: **2018/08/15/35021470/09/MC**

Name: Ms VM Monamoleli

Student: 35021470

**Researcher(s):** Name: Ms VM Monamoleli  
E-mail address: mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com  
Telephone: +27 83 411 9080

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Dr PK Triegaardt  
E-mail address: Paul.triegaardt@gmail.com  
Telephone: +971 50 838 4027

#### Title of research:

**The effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools**

**Qualification:** M. Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2018/08/15 to 2021/08/15.

*The **medium risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2018/08/15 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:



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1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2021/08/15**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2018/08/15/35021470/09/MC** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Dr M Claassens**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
mcdtc@netactive.co.za



**Prof V McKay**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Mckayvi@unisa.ac.za



Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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## Annexure B:

### Consent letter for permission to conduct interviews with the selected schools.



Building No. 5, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province  
Private Bag X11341, Mbombela, 1200.  
Tel: 013 766 5552/5115, Toll Free Line: 0800 203 116

Litiko le Temfundvo, Umnyango we Fundo

Departement van Onderwys

Ndzawulo ya Dyondzo

Ms VM Monamoleli  
Email: [mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com](mailto:mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com)  
Cell: 0834119080

**RE: THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON RAISING GRADE 12 ACHIEVEMENT IN MPUMALANGA RURAL SCHOOLS**

Your application to conduct research study was received and is therefore acknowledged. The title of your research project reads: “**The effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools**”. I trust that the aims and the objectives of the study will benefit the whole department especially the beneficiaries. Your request is approved subject to you observing the provisions of the departmental research policy which is available in the department website. You are requested to adhere to your university’s research ethics as spelt out in your research ethics.

In terms of the research policy, data or any research activity can be conducted after school hours as per appointment with affected participants. You are also requested to share your findings with the relevant sections of the department so that we may consider implementing your findings if that will be in the best interest of the department. To this effect, your final approved research report (both soft and hard copy) should be submitted to the department so that your recommendations could be implemented. You may be required to prepare a presentation and present at the departments’ annual research dialogue.

For more information kindly liaise with the department’s research unit @ 013 766 5476/5148 Or [a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za](mailto:a.baloyi@education.mpu.gov.za)

The department wishes you well in this important project and pledges to give you the necessary support you may need.

  
MRS MOC MHLABANE  
HEAD: EDUCATION

18, 10, 18  
DATE



## Annexure C:

### Consent letter for permission from principals to conduct interviews



VM Monamoleli  
468 Firewood Street  
Thatchfield Gardens  
Thatchfield Manor  
CENTURION  
0157

Mobile No.: 083 411 9080

E-mail address: [mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com](mailto:mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com)

31 October 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Veronica Mapaseka Monamoleli, I am doing research under the supervision of Dr P.K. Triegaardt, a lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Leadership, towards a Master of Education degree at the University of South Africa.

I would like to request your school to participate in a study entitled "The effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools."

The aims of the research project are:

- To explain the contributions of the school governing body and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst grade 12 learners in public secondary schools. To examine the characteristic of an effective school governing body.
- To investigate the strategies which can be implemented by the school governing body and parents to improve the academic achievement of grade 12 learners in public secondary schools.
- To describe how these strategies of the school governing body and parents could support change and enhancing academic performance of grade 12 learners in the public secondary schools.



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- To offer recommendations that might serve as a guide line for school governing body and parents to improve academic performance of grade 12 in public secondary schools.

As previously mentioned, the study will entail research at three selected schools in the Mkhuhlu Circuit. At each of the three selected schools, I would like to interview the principal, one teacher, one SGB member, three parents and three grade 12 learners. The study will also entail the following steps in order to ensure a high level of professionalism:

- Each interview with the individual participants will be approximately 20 to 30 minutes
- The study involves taking part in face-to-face interviews and if you agree, I would like to digitally record (voice) the discussion to ensure accuracy when transcribing the content.
- Interviews will be conducted after school hours so that the normal teaching and learning process is not interrupted.
- Each school as well as each participant will be assigned an alpha-numeric pseudonym. This will be done to secure and to ensure anonymity. Hence, each participant will not be identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
- Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and participants may withdraw without any consequence.

The benefits of this study will include a thorough investigation into the challenges and complexities involved the role of SGB in enhancing parental involvement to improve grade 12 academic performance. In this way, SGB and the school will be in a better position to implement successful strategies when involving parents in the learners' education for improved academic performance of those learners. As a researcher, I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from the individual interviews.

No risks are involved in this study. Furthermore, no injury is anticipated and in the case of emotional harm, the school psychologists at the various schools will be informed. Additionally, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participating in the research.



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The feedback procedure will entail the following: after I complete the interviews and processing data, I will hand-deliver a copy of the individual transcripts to each participant in order for them to verify the accuracy of the details. Thus, they will be allowed to give their views on the interpretations of their interview. Each participant will therefore be given the golden opportunity to vindicate the trustworthiness and credibility of their expressions in this study which deal with the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools.”

Thank you for your support, I kindly await your response in connection with my request.

Yours sincerely



V M Monamoleli

UNISA Med student



Dr P K Triegaardt

Supervisor



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### Consent

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/ or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidentially unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the voice recording of the interviews

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Name & Surname (Please print)      Participant Signature      Date

Veronica Mapaseka Monamoleli

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name and surname (please print)      Researcher's signature      Date



## Annexure D:

### Consent letter for permission from participant to conduct interviews



Veronica Monamoleli

468 Firewood Street

Thatchfield Gardens

Thatchfield Manor

CENTURION

0157

Mobile No.: 083 411 9080

E-mail address: [mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com](mailto:mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com)

31 October 2018

Dear Participant

My name is Veronica Mapaseka Monamoleli and I am doing research under supervision of Dr P K Triegaardt, a lecturer in the Department of Education Management and Leadership towards a master of Education degree at the University of South Africa. We therefore, inviting you to participate in a study entitled "The effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools."

The aims of the research project are:

- To explain the contributions of the school governing body and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst grade 12 learners in public secondary schools. To examine the characteristic of an effective school governing body.
- To investigate the strategies which can be implemented by the school governing body and parents to improve the academic achievement of grade 12 learners in public secondary schools.
- To describe how these strategies of the school governing body and parents could support change and enhancing academic performance of grade 12 learners in the public secondary schools.



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- To offer recommendations that might serve as a guideline for school governing body and parents to improve academic performance of grade 12 in public secondary schools.

The study is expected to collect important information that could benefit school and SGB as they implement successful strategies when enhancing parental involvement for the improved grade 12 academic performances. This will be done by means of a thorough investigation into the challenges and complexities involved in involving parents in the improvement of learners' results. I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from individual interviews.

Three schools in the Mkhuhlu circuit have been selected for this study. As a teacher at one of these schools, you are being invited to participate in this study because you have had experience in engaging with parents as far as their involvement in the school is concerned. I obtained your information from the Mkhuhlu circuit office. At each of the three selected schools, I will interview the principal, one teacher, one SGB member, three parents and three grade 12 learners.

The interviews with all the participants will be conducted after school hours so that the normal teaching and learning process is not interrupted. I plan to spend two afternoons at your school doing all these digitally recorded interviews. Each interview will have duration of approximately 20 to 30 minutes. This means that I will be able to interview the principal, one teacher and one SGB member on the first afternoon. The next afternoon will be for three parents and grade 12 learners' interviews. Here again, each of these interviews will be approximately 20 to 30 minutes.

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you decide to take part, you will be given an information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.



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The potential benefits of this study will include a thorough investigation into the challenges and complexities involved in the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools.”

In this way, SGB and the school will be in a better position to implement successful strategies in encouraging the parental involvement in the school. As a researcher, I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from the individual interviews.

No negative consequences or risks will be encountered if you participate in this study. Furthermore, no injury is anticipated. Additionally, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the study.

You have a right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from me, will know about your involvement in this research. This means that your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. To ensure anonymity, your answers will be given an alpha-numeric pseudonym code and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conferencing proceedings. As an example of this, your assigned alpha-numeric code will be AT1 or AT2.

I will store hard copies of your answers for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet in my private study in my house for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on my password-protected laptop computer. I will be the only one who knows the password. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. In the future, if it is deemed necessary for the information to be destroyed, hard copies will be shredded and any electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the laptop computer through the use of a relevant software program.

As previously mentioned, there will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. Participation in this study is purely voluntary with no cost to you as a participant.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. You can have a copy of the approval letter from me if you wish so.



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If you would like to be informed of the final research findings or should you require any further information or want to contact me about any aspect of this study, please contact Veronica Mapaseka Monamoledi on mobile number 083 411 9080 or via email [mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com](mailto:mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com).

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr P.K. Triegaardt on his mobile number +971 50 935 8073 or via email [paul.triegaardt@gmail.com](mailto:paul.triegaardt@gmail.com).

Thank you for your support. I kindly await your response in connection with my request.

Yours sincerely



V.M. Monamoledi  
UNISA Med student



Dr P.K. Triegaardt  
Supervisor



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## Consent

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/ or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidentially unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the voice recording of the interviews

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Name & Surname (Please print)      Participant Signature      Date

Veronica Mapaseka Monamoleli

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's name and surname (please print)      Researcher's signature      Date



## Annexure E:

### Assent letter for permission to conduct interviews with under-age learners



Veronica Monamoleli

468 Firewood Street

Thatchfield Gardens

Thatchfield Manor

CENTURION

0157

Mobile No.: 083 411 9080

E-mail address: [mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com](mailto:mapasekamuthumuni@gmail.com)

31 October 2018

Dear Learner

I am doing a study on "The effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools" as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your principal has given me permission to do this study in your school. I would like to invite to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find effective ways that your school and SGB to enhance parental involvement in your school to improve your academic performance as grade 12s. This may help you and many other learners of your age and grade in different schools.

This letter is to explain to you what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be in this study.

I would like to ask you to interview you for about 20 to 30 minutes after normal school hours so that your normal academic program is not interrupted. Afterwards, I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. Participation is voluntary and you do not have to be part of this study if you do not want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop



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taking part at any time without penalty. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticize you. When I am finished with my study, I shall return to your school to a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found out in my study. I shall invite to come and listen to my talk. Lastly, as the study involves taking part in face-to-face interviews and if you agree, I would like to digitally record (voice) the discussion to ensure accuracy when transcribing the content.

The potential benefits of this study will include a thorough investigation into the challenges and complexities involved the role of SGB in enhancing parental involvement to improve grade 12 academic performance. In this way, SGB and the school will be in a better position to implement successful strategies when involving parents in the learners' education for improved academic performance of those learners. As a researcher, I will develop concepts and arrive at conclusions based on the relationships, patterns and themes that will be identified in the collected data from the individual interviews.

No risks are involved if you participate in the study. You will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study. This means that you will not receive any type of payment from participating in the study. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or can have your parent or another adult call me on my mobile number which is 083 411 9080. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: V.M. MONAMOEDI

Phone number: 083 411 9080

Do not sign the written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions.



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## WRITTEN ASSENT

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about this study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to be part in the study.

_____	_____	_____
Learner's name (print)	Learner's signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Witness's name (print)	Witness's signature	Date

(The witness is over 18 years old and present when signed)

_____	_____	_____
Parent/guardian's name (print)	parent/guardian's signature	Date

V.M. MONAMOEDI

Researcher's name (print)



Researcher's signature

Date



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## Annexure F:

### Interview Schedule



#### INTERVIEW QUESTION(S) ATTACHED

##### Main Research question

What is the effect of school governance and parental involvement on raising Grade 12 achievement in Mpumalanga rural schools?

Sub questions	Example questions	Responses by participants
What are the contributions of the school governing body and parents towards the poor academic achievement amongst grade 12 learners at public secondary school?	<p>How often the SGB meets with parents?</p> <p>Is SGB supportive to the principal and teachers?</p> <p>How do teachers communicate with parents and how parents communicate and monitor the learner's progress?</p> <p>How SGB contributes in the school?</p>	
What are the characteristics of an effective school governing body?	<p>How effective is the SGB in your school?</p> <p>Are the parents fully represented in the SGB, if yes do they have a say in the school's activity?</p> <p>What are the skills that SGB bring to school for better results?</p>	
Which strategies by the school governing body and parents	There are lots of factors that influence the grade 12 performance such as absenteeism, behaviour and	



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will be required to improve the academic achievement of grade 12 learners at public secondary schools?	<p>motivation, do you think SGB as representatives of parents, do justice in terms of involving parents to take a lead in minimizing these factors for improved academic performance?</p> <p>Do parents sometimes voluntarily engage in school's activities to support teaching and learning?</p>	
How can these strategies of the school governing body and parents support change and enhancing academic performance of grade 12 learners in public secondary schools?	<p>Are there programs by the parents and SGB in place to support learners to perform better academically?</p> <p>How is communication between the teachers and parents?</p> <p>How do the school and SGB create a conducive environment for parents to be fully involved?</p>	



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## Annexure G:

### Document Analysis

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS ISSUE	RECORDS		COMMENTS ON DOCUMENTS
	Y	N	
Does the SGB made the document available for the school?			
Is the School Governing Body involved in updating the School's Code of Conduct?			
Is it implemented when there is a behaviour of learners that is against it?			
Are learners aware of what is stipulated in the Code of conduct?			
How often do parents and the SGB meet?			
Is the correspondence effective or do parents honour the correspondence?			
If the invite from SGB to parents is not honoured by parents, what does the SGB do correct that?			
What is normally the purpose of these meetings?			
Do parents participate in these meetings and how?			



## ANNEXURE H

Letter from editor

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5 January 2019

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Herewith I, **Cornelia Geldenhuys (ID 521114 0083 088)** declare that I am a qualified, accredited language practitioner and that I have edited the full document for an MEd degree for the following student

**VERONICA MAPASEKA MONAMOLEDI**

### **THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON RAISING GRADE 12 ACHIEVEMENT IN MPUMALANGA RURAL SCHOOLS**

All changes were indicated by track changes and comments **for the student to verify and finalise.**

**The undersigned takes no responsibility for corrections/amendments not carried out in the final copy submitted for examination purposes.**



.....  
**C GELDENHUYS**

**MA (LIN – *cum laude*), MA (Mus), HED, Postgraduate Dipl, Library Science,  
UTLM**

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**GEAKKREDITEERDE LID VAN SAVI – Lidmaatskapnommer: 1001474 (APVert)**  
**Member of/Lid van PEG (The Professional Editors Guild)**